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Inter-Arab Affairs

GCC Finance Committee Stresses 'Unified Position'

LD2204222591 Riyadh SPA in English 1935 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Text] Riyadh, April 22, SPA—The Gulf Cooperation Council's [GCC] committee for finance and economic cooperation, began its 28th session here tonight under the chairmanship of Shaykh Ahmad Bin-Sayf Al Thani, the Qatari minister of justice.

In addition to Muhammad Aba-al-Khayl, the minister of finance and national economy, who heads Saudi Arabia's delegation to the session, ministers in-charge of finance and economy from Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain and Oman are attending the meeting.

Addressing the opening session, Shaykh Ahmad congratulated his colleagues on the occasion of the liberation of Kuwait and said the current meeting is held amidst important political and economic circumstances and changes that form a real test of the GCC states' strength in dealing with them. He cited the big responsibility facing the committee in its efforts to reinforce the joint economic action and enhance cooperation ties between them as per directives of the GCC leaders who had conferred in Doha last December.

He said the GCC leaders had recommended that the committee would accelerate the process of new understandings in the framework of the joint economic action and implement the rest of the articles of the joint unified economic agreement as soon as possible to realise the best interests of the GCC peoples.

Shaykh Ahmad expressed confidence that the committee would be able to adopt appropriate resolutions and recommendations.

In an address on the occasion, Muhammad Aba-al-Khayl, the Saudi finance and national economy minister, said the GCC is a fine tool of cooperation and welfare. He expressed delight that this important meeting is convened in the aftermath of the great victory that had led to the liberation of Kuwait and its safe return to work effectively in association with other GCC states for the welfare of the region, the Arab world and the entire international community.

Aba-al-Khayl noted the importance of the meeting—the first since the liberation of Kuwait and the painful events that had been witnessed by the region in the past months.

A great deal of work now awaits the GCC states, which could pursue a unified position for the best interests of the region, the Arab nation and the rest of the world, said the Saudi finance and national economy minister. He expressed confidence that the GCC will be able to undertake its leading role as was the case in the past. The ministers, then, held a closed-door meeting.

Baker Mideast Tour Part of 'New Peace Offensive'

PM2204093691 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 17 Apr 91 p 13

[Editorial: "Baker and the Stage of Searching for Answers"]

[Text] U.S. Secretary of State James Baker's decision to return to the Middle East quickly constitutes a clear message to the parties to the conflict in the region. The message is that they must not miss the present opportunity, which Washington seems anxious not to waste. Not in fact the decision comes almost as a shock in terms of the swift demand for answers to the questions put and the rejection of the method of dealing with crises as though the best advice were to wait and see.

What is certain is that Baker found something to build on among the results of his previous tour, and so decided to return in a bid to modify the terminology and turn willingness into commitments, and probably dates. In Israel Baker obtained the Yitzhaq Shamir government's agreement to participate in a regional conference that would move along two lines: Arab-Israeli relations and the Palestinian problem. Egypt regarded the regional conference idea as interesting and emphasized that there is no problem with names, as long as the conference is an instrument for peace. On the eve of Baker's meeting with his Jordanian counterpart, Tahir al-Masri, Amman said that the substance is more important than the form. It did not conceal its willingness to respond to the U.S. move, despite the lack of agreement on details. At the end of Baker's visit Damascus did not say that all it wanted was an international conference. In fact it said that it wanted a "peace conference" in which the United Nations would play an important role. For his part, Baker said that his country did not at all object to the idea of convening an international conference, but that it believed that this is not the right time to convene it, as though he did not want to exclude the possibility of providing an international umbrella for the outcome of the negotiations, the results of which he said that Washington would not try to predetermine, adding that it believed that they would proceed from the two Security Council resolutions and in accordance with the territory-for-peace principle.

Baker's decision to return to the region is intended at the same time to confirm the U.S. Administration's commitment to the promises that it made during the Gulf war in which it emphasized the need to move peace and observance of international principles to the lines of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

There is no doubt that through this decision Baker has chosen to put his credibility and that of President Bush's administration on the line. This, because it is no longer a matter of fact-finding tours. The time has come now to work to find formulas and provide channels. Despite the difficult and explosive details of this chronic conflict, what is certain is that a new peace offensive has started and that the parties will think for quite a while before deciding to remain outside it or to await its outcome.

Palestinian Affairs

PLO Central Council Proceedings Continue in Tunis

Discusses U.S. Peace Plan

LD2204205691 Algiers Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1702 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Text] The PLO Central Council held a meeting yesterday in Tunisia under the chairmanship of brother-president Abu 'Ammar [Yasir 'Arafat], and speaker of the Palestinian National Council [PNC], Shaykh 'Abd-al-Hamid al-Sa'ih. Among the basic issues discussed at the meeting was a debate on the U.S. plan to hold a peace conference in the region. The meeting also discussed PLO political strategies following the end of the Gulf war, and set a date for the 20th session of the PNC.

The Palestinian diplomacy also highlighted the role that should be played by the PLO vis-a-vis the peace efforts in its capacity as the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, as was stressed by the Palestinian personalities during their meetings with the U.S. Administration.

'Arafat: Jerusalem 'Basic Issue'

LD2304100791 Tunis Domestic Service in Arabic 0600 GMT 23 Apr 91

[Text] On the second day of the proceedings of the Palestinian Central Council in Tunis, it was emphasized that the Palestinian people utterly reject any U.S. conditions harming their inalienable national requirements for freedom and sovereignty within an independent state with Jerusalem as its capital.

In this regard, Palestianian President Yasir 'Arafat said in a speech that Jerusalem remains the basic issue for the Palestinian people and the Arab and Islamic homelands. He emphasized that normalization of relations with Israel would never take place at the expense of holy Jerusalem and the rights of the Palestinian people.

PNSF Rejects Regional Conference Proposal

JN2204180691 (Clandestine) Al-Quds Palestinian Arab Radio in Arabic 1630 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Text] The Palestinian National Salvation Front [PNSF] has issued the following statement:

The PNSF leadership held a meeting on 22 April 1991, reviewed current political developments and discussed at length the United States' extensive moves and declared aim to achieve a political settlement in the region through ambiguous and contradictory formulas.

While the United States adopts a very effective policy to enforce UN resolutions in the Gulf, it does not demonstrate any such determination to enforce UN resolutions on the Arab-Zionist conflict and its core issue, the Palestine question. This attitude casts doubt about U.S. intentions and credibility. The United States declares that it will not put any pressure on Israel to comply with these resolutions or end immigration and settlement.

In light of these political and diplomatic moves, the PNSF stresses the following points:

1. The front rejects the proposed regional conference, which conflicts with the resolutions of international legitimacy on this issue. It also rejects bilateral and unilateral solutions, which certainly run counter to a just and comprehensive peace.

2. The front rejects the joint Palestinian-Jordanian delegation formula, proposed by the Zionist enemy and the United States, as well as the so-called Jordanian option. The PNSF stresses that the unified PLO is the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

3. The front stresses the importance of a unified Palestinian cause and people and of independent representation. The front also rejects any measure or solution that may lead to the confiscation of or encroachment upon the Palestinian people's inalienable national rights.

4. The front stresses the need to implement the resolutions of international legitimacy and the United Nations on the Arab-Zionist conflict—resolutions that back our firm national rights, including the right to repatriation, self-determination, and the establishment of an independent state.

Out of its concern for Palestine's cause and its people's rights and owing to its understanding of this dangerous stage and the threat it entails for the national and pan-Arab cause, the PNSF:

1. Calls on the whole Palestinian people and all our Arab nation's people and political forces and parties to show more vigilance, insistence, and steadfastness to foil the hostile plan and to declare adherence to the Palestinian people's unity of thought, rights, and cause in its national and pan-Arab dimension.

2. Reaffirms its initiative of 8 April 1991 regarding national unity and appeals to all the Palestinian forces, factions, and figures to shoulder their national responsibilities and positively respond to this initiative to achieve comprehensive national unity and protect the Palestine question from the dangers threatening it.

VOP Recalls 'Bitter Experiences' With U.S.

LD2204212591 Algiers Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1702 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Station commentary]

[Text] Those who are acquainted with the stances of all parties concerned with the Arab-Zionist conflict are not unaware of the obstacles that are today standing in the face of establishing a full and comprehensive peace in the region. These obstacles are a Zionist product with U.S. blessing, or at least blessed by a U.S. silence.

The third tour of U.S. Secretary of State James Baker in the region has revealed in a way that cannot disguise the truth—which Baker has and is still trying to turn a blind eye against, and for which he is still trying to find excuses and justifications—to the extent that the matter has

reached an extreme manifested in voicing rejections and challenging all kinds of pressures, to which the U.S. Administration may resort in order to make the Zionist entity accept the resolutions of international legitimacy.

If Baker's third tour and the ensuing statements regarding Washington's intention to exert political and diplomatic pressures on the Zionist entity to heed the resolutions of the international legitimacy have aroused a noticeable degree of interest and expectation on both the Palestinian and Arab arenas, such interest should not make us neglect those lengthy periods of bitter experiences with the U.S. Administration.

We believe that while our people, inside and outside the occupied land, is following Baker's moves in the region with interest, this people does not show any yearning regarding those tours or their expected results, especially since Washington has not shown, up to now, a sincere determination and seriousness to exert the required pressure on the Zionist entity to accept the resolutions of international legitimacy.

Undoubtedly, the lack of yearning from our masses regarding the mirage of Bakerite moves in the region expresses a conscious understanding of the mechanism of the U.S. mentality, and it expresses their feelings not to give these U.S. moves any dimensions that would go beyond their true volume and weight. Faced with all this one can say that the Palestinian cause finds itself today at a significant and serious point. It will either lead it to the desired solution, or it will lead into the circle of wars, threats, and tensions if the U.S. Administration persists in its Zionist-biased policies. It is the Zionist entity that rejects all peace initiatives that are based on international legitimacy.

Fatah-The Uprising Claims Upper Galilee Operation

NC2204172991 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 1045 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Text] Fatah-The Uprising has claimed responsibility for the operation which took place near an Israeli settlement in upper Galilee at dawn today. The movement said that one of its units, which had crossed the Lebanese-Israeli border to attack the Israeli settlement, clashed with Israeli soldiers.

According to a statement by the movement, the Israeli troops suffered several casualties. The statement added that two Palestinians were wounded.

French Foreign Minister Meets 'Arafat in Tripoli

LD2304004591 Tripoli Voice of Greater Arab Homeland in Arabic 2315 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Text] At his residence in Tripoli Palestinian president Yasir 'Arafat received French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas who is paying a visit to the Great Jamahiriyah. During the meeting a discussion took place on the latest developments in the Arab arena, the Palestinian issue, and Palestinian-French relations. Palestinian president Yasir 'Arafat and the accompanying delegation arrived in Tripoli last night [22 April] on a visit to the Great Jamahiriyah.

Dumas Ends Visit, Departs

LD2304082191 Tripoli JANA in Arabic 0803 GMT 23 Apr 91

[Text] Tripoli, 23 Apr (JANA)—French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas left Tripoli this morning after a visit to the Great Jamahiriyah during which he conducted talks and contacts about developing and consolidating the Libyan Arab-French relations and numerous international issues. He was received by Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi, leader of the revolution; and by Palestinian president Yasir 'Arafat.

He was sent off at Tripoli international airport by brother Ibrahim al-Bishari, secretary of the General People's Committee of the People's Bureau for External Liaison and International Cooperation.

PLO Tunis Meeting Seeks Settlement, Peace

LD2204212491 Algiers Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1702 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Station commentary]

[Text] The PLO Central Council is meeting in Tunisia amid significant circumstances at local, regional, and international levels to reemphasize the effectiveness of the Palestinian stance and its ability to face up to challenges while carrying out serious efforts for a successful, peaceful political march based on constants provided by international legitimacy.

Although the decision for the date of this meeting to discuss the situation resulting from the Gulf war was made in March, the fact that it takes place now, while U.S. Secretary of State James Baker has not left the last Arab capital on the final leg of his third Middle East shuttle tour, sets out necessarily the hints and signs of the Palestinian official response regarding the results of this new U.S. policy vis-a-vis the Palestinian cause.

If the U.S. Administration still insists on halting its dialogue with the PLO, despite the continuation of this dialogue with local Palestinian figures who have been stressing time and time again during the past two months that they do not represent an alternative to the PLO in any way, and despite the fact that they are the side delegated and entrusted by the PLO to act on this issue of political dialogue, Washington should be fully aware of the official and legitimate importance that forms the basis of the meeting of the PLO Central Council.

In this connection, the results and resolutions that will be adopted by the council will not stop at defining the required

arrangements for the next 20th session of the council, despite the importance and influence of such measures obviously, but it will define the right path for achieving the firm steps that are conducive to a full and just peace.

The PLO has striven to protect the national constants during the most difficult and crucial circumstances. At the same time, the PLO has striven to exhaust all available opportunities for the success of the efforts for a political settlement that are based on what is right and just. During the meeting of its Central Council that takes place during a most difficult and extremely significant phase, the PLO is even more eager to exhaust opportunities for a political settlement.

Algeria

Government Meeting Discusses Elections

LD2204145691 Algiers APS in English 1146 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Text] Algiers, 22/04/91 (APS)—The meeting of members of Government and Walis, chaired by the head of government [Mouloud Hamrouche] ended yesterday here. This meeting was mainly devoted to the evaluation of the preparation and technical modalities of organization of legislative elections of 27 June 1991.

The enforcement of new legislative and statutory measures relating to the Waqf [religious endowment] properties and the new organization of mosques was dealt with by several speakers.

The head of government insisted on the necessity of a rigorous preparation and organization of the next electoral operations which are to take place in the total transparence by associations, in the frame of laws, the whole parties as well as the national means of information.

The end of the revision of lists will be followed by the establishment of new cards of electors whose distribution will be made according to modalities capable of guaranteeing their effective receipt by the concerned citizen.

The Walis (heads of province) recalled that the electoral lists are at the disposal of citizens and representatives of political associations for consultation.

Preparations relating to the material organization of the electoral operation are taking place in good conditions. On the material plan, the organization of bureaus and [words indistinct] has practically ended and the whole conditions enabling a good achievement of this vote are met.

On another turn, the home minister declared that the whole means will be mobilized so every citizen can freely accomplish his electoral duty.

Regarding means of transport and communication, the home minister said that everything will be set up before 27 June 1991.

The respect of the law forbidding the (?use) of mosques in the forum of the electoral campaign was examined.

Regarding these new texts relating to the organization of mosques, Mouloud Hamrouche recalled that their promulgation came in the frame of the implementation of the government's programme.

Egypt

Mubarak Replies to Letter From Israel's Shamir

NC2204190191 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1845 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Text] Cairo, 22 Apr (MENA)—President Husni Mubarak sent a letter to Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir today in response to a letter he received from Shamir earlier this month.

Egyptian Ambassador to Israel Muhammad Basyuni delivered the letter to Shamir this afternoon. The letter deals with the Middle East peace process and the basic conditions that must be fulfilled to achieve a just settlement.

This was announced by President Mubarak's press secretary, Muhammad 'Abd-al-Mun'im.

Mubarak Letter Detailed

NC2304060891 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2310 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Text] Cairo, 22 Apr (MENA)—In Tuesday's edition, AL-JUMHURIYAH says that in his urgent letter to Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir, President Husni Mubarak emphasized the importance of moving toward the achievement of a comprehensive, lasting, and just peace in the region. He also said he believes that a concern for peace should move the parties to embark on practical steps to realize the joint interests of all parties and respond to their legitimate rights, especially concerning the Palestinian people.

The paper says that President Mubarak also affirmed that the time has now come for practical steps to be taken to attain this goal which will lead to regional stability.

The paper says that ongoing contacts among the parties, in which the United States is playing an important role through U.S. Secretary of State James Baker's visits, aims to develop specific ideas on peace and how apply practical steps to achieve this goal.

AL-JUMHURIYAH has learned that through the ongoing contacts and consultations the parties have agreed to call the proposed conference a peace conference instead of a regional or an international conference. The contacts are continuing concerning the conference's participants, date, venue, and agenda.

AL-'AHRAM Interviews Israel's Shamir, Peres

NC2304070691 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2315 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Text] Cairo, 22 Apr (MENA)—In an complex interview with journalist Anis Mansur, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir said Israel wants to normalize relations with the Arab states and negotiate with the Palestinians.

AL-'AHRAM will publish the interview tomorrow under the headline: "The Remote Hope for Peace." In the interview, Shamir says he wants to deal with both the Arab states and the Palestinians because the Arab stand

influences the Palestinian position and vice versa—this is so because the Palestinians are part of the Arab world. He said progress on the Palestinian problem will lead to normalizing Arab relations with Israel and, consequently, to abolishing the question of war, ending the boycott, and halting the regional arms race.

Shamir expressed his conviction that Egypt has a major role in the peace process because it is the largest Arab state, has experience dealing with Israel, and because President Mubarak has widespread respect. He said if Egypt cannot fully implement the Camp David agreement because some Arab states do not want it to, Israel can negotiate and reach solutions with the Palestinians.

Shamir then discussed his May 1989 initiative for holding elections in the West Bank and in Gaza which he hopes will lead to negotiations for a lasting solution. He said that the PLO and the Arab states rejected the initiative. Shamir agrees that the war (meaning the Gulf war) is a good opportunity for change in the region, provided that it can be implemented and is realistic.

Shamir said new proposals are being studied, some of which are related to the situation between us and Syria, although I do not see any real reason to change that relationship.

Shamir complained to Anis Mansur about what he called Egyptian press attacks against him and the Jewish people. He said that this problem affects the people and their emphasis on peace despite the fact that the Egyptian people want peace.

Anis Mansur also held an interview with Israeli opposition leader Shim'on Peres. The paper says that Peres was clearer when he said that Israel and the United States will hold elections next year. You must clearly realize [words indistinct] Israel wants and that the Palestinian people have legitimate rights. He said we have our legitimate security concerns and we must hold political negotiations with the Palestinians and economic negotiations with the region's states.

Peres said: President Mubarak has won worldwide respect, his country is stable, he is respected by the Arabs, he has an excellent relationship with Syria, and he is capable of activating peace in the Middle East. All the Palestinians and Jordanians together in the negotiations for peace. [sentence as received]

Peres asked what Saddam Husayn had gained from the death of hundreds of thousands of people and the loss of thousands of millions of dollars. He said that Saddam accuses the amirs of spending their funds on palaces, but Peres asked whether it is better to spend these funds on missiles? Palaces are less harmful than bombs.

French Foreign Minister Dumas Arrives in Cairo

NC2304103091 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0830 GMT 23 Apr 91

[Text] Cairo, 23 Apr (MENA)—French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas arrived in Cairo this morning on a one-day visit to Egypt. During the visit, Dumas will meet with President Husni Mubarak and will hold talks with Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid, deputy prime minister and foreign minister, on the latest developments in the Middle East region.

Dumas' visit to Cairo is part of a Middle East tour he is currently making in a bid to exert efforts to promote the peace process, resolve the Palestinian issue, and reach the necessary guarantees to resolve this issue.

Dumas was received at the airport by Ambassador Samu Thabit, chief of protocol at the Foreign Ministry, Alain Dejammet, French ambassador in Cairo, and a number of senior Foreign Ministry officials.

Talks Open at Foreign Ministry

NC2304103591 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1025 GMT 23 Apr 91

[Text] Cairo, 23 Apr (MENA)—Official talks between Egypt and France opened at the Foreign Ministry today. Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al- Majid, deputy prime minister and foreign minister, led the Egyptian side to the talks and French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas led the French side.

The two sides will discuss the developments in the Middle East in light of the ongoing efforts to promote the peace process, find a just solution to the Palestinian issue, and the role of France the the EC in contributing to these efforts. The discussion will also deal with Egyptian-French relations in various fields, particularly economic, cultural, and technical domains.

Saudi Crown Prince Arrives on Official Visit

NC1904164791 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1325 GMT 19 Apr 91

[Excerpt] Cairo, 19 Apr (MENA)—Prince 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al- 'Aziz, Saudi Arabia's crown prince, deputy prime minister, and commander of the National Guard, arrived in Cairo this afternoon on a visit to Egypt.

Prime Minister Dr. 'Atif Sidqi led those receiving the great guest at Cairo International Airport. [passage omitted]

Meets With Mubarak

NC1904194091 Cairo Egyptian Space Channel in Arabic 1900 GMT 19 Apr 91

[Excerpt] President Muhammad Husni Mubarak received His Highness Prince 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, Saudi crown prince, first deputy prime minister, and commander of the Saudi National Guard, at the presidential offices in Cairo today. [passage omitted]

Departs 20 Apr

NC2004105391 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2030 GMT 20 Apr 91

[Excerpt] Cairo, 20 Apr (MENA)—His Highness Prince 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, Saudi crown prince, first deputy prime minister, and commander of the Saudi

National Guard, left Cairo at noon today following a two-day visit to Egypt. [passage omitted]

Sidqi: Visit 'Very Fruitful'

NC2004120891 Cairo MENA in English 1140 GMT 20 Apr 91

[Text] Cairo, April 20 (MENA)—The visit to Egypt by Prince 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, Saudi crown prince, deputy premier and commander of the national guard, was "very fruitful" despite its short duration, said today Dr. 'Atif Sidqi, prime minister.

Ties of cooperation between the two countries in all domains were discussed, Dr. Sidqi told airport reporters after having sent off the Saudi official.

The visit comes in the light of circumstances which the Arab region, the Gulf area and the Middle East have lived and of a set of initiatives that emerged from inside and outside the region, he added.

Nigerian Oil Minister Arrives on Two-Day Visit

NC1604195091 Cairo MENA in English 1905 GMT 16 Apr 91

[Text] Cairo, April 16 (MENA)—Nigerian Minister of Petroleum Resources Jibril Aminu arrived here tonight on a two-day visit.

Aminu will deliver a message to President Husni Mubarak from Nigerian President Ibrahim Babangida.

Aminu is currently on a tour of a number of the region's states, including Egypt, Jordan, and Kuwait to deliver messages to the heads of states of those countries.

Gives Mubarak President's Message

NC1904194591 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1840 GMT 19 Apr 91

[Excerpt] Cairo, 19 Apr (MENA)—President Husni Mubarak has received a message from Nigerian President Ibrahim Babangida. The message was delivered by Jibril Aminu, Nigerian minister of petroleum resources, during his meeting with the president this evening. Dr. Butrus Ghali, minister of state for foreign affairs, also attended the meeting. [passage omitted]

Departs 20 Apr

NC2004111791 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1107 GMT 20 Apr 91

[Text] Cairo, 20 Apr (MENA)—Nigerian Minister of Petroleum Resources Jibril Aminu left Cairo this afternoon following a three-day visit to Egypt during which he was received by President Husni Mubarak.

The Nigerian minister delivered a message to President Mubarak from Nigerian President Ibrahim Babangida on African and international conditions and the economic issues that concern the region.

Libya

French Foreign Minister Arrives With Delegation

LD2204153691 Tripoli JANA in Arabic 1450 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Text] Tripoli, 22 Apr (JANA)—French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas, accompanied by a delegation, arrived in Tripoli today on a visit to the Great Jamahiriyah.

He was welcomed by brother Ibrahim al-Bishari, the secretary of the Libyan General People's Committee for External Liaison and International Cooperation.

Opens Cooperation Talks

LD2204223391 Tripoli Libyan Television Network in Arabic 1930 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Text] Libyan Arab-French talks began today at the headquarters of the Popular Bureau for External Liaison and International Cooperation. The talks are being held to develop bilateral cooperation in the interest of realizing joint benefits for the two peoples in the Great Jamahiriyah and France.

The talks were attended by the brother secretary of the General People's Committee [GPC] for External Liaison and International Cooperation, the secretary of the GPC for oil, and a number of directors of bureau departments, and the secretary of the Libyan Arab Bureau in Paris. The French side was represented by Roland Dumas, the French foreign minister; Thierry de Beauce, minister of international cultural relations, the accompanying delegation, and the French ambassador to the Great Jamahiriyah.

The brother secretary of the GPC for International Liaison and Cooperation spoke at the beginning of the talks. He stressed that this visit will contribute to the development of bilateral relations and joint cooperation, which embodies the aspirations of the two peoples in the Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriyah and in France, and it will strengthen relations in all spheres. He noted that this visit comes after the end of the Kuwait crisis, which we managed to surmount, but after deep wounds. Joint action must begin to tackle the problem because it affects world security and peace. He stressed the importance of action for safeguarding international peace and security, noting that Libya and France are concerned in this matter.

He stressed the need to convene the joint Libyan Arab-French committee to draw up practical programs regarding bilateral relations and to study all the general joint issues that contribute to realizing greater cooperation between the two countries. He said that this visit will provide us with the opportunity to discuss a number of issues: first, the situation in the Middle East; the issues of peace and security in the area; the importance of developing cooperation and relations between the Arab Maghreb Union, France, and Europe in general; strengthening cooperation between Mediterranean and southern Europe states; and also conditions in Iraq.

The brother secretary of the GPC for International Liaison and Cooperation at the end of his speech explained that this visit will provide the chance to discuss joint bilateral action for the sake of realizing democracy, human rights, and security and stability in Africa, and for creating relations of solidarity which would contribute to learning the culture of the two countries. He explained that the Great Jamahiriyah's policy is to support all cooperative relations with France and the states of the world in the interest of realizing the common interest.

French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas made a speech in which he stressed that his visit comes within the framework of strengthening the relations of his country with the Great Jamahiriyah in implementing the political will expressed by President Francois Mitterrand. He said the French are working to strengthen and establish excellent relations with Libya on the basis of mutual respect, and on an equal basis in the long term through improved cooperation in all fields.

The French minister affirmed that his country is eager to maintain these relations, and that there is no reason to hamper them or push them back. He said: I have always been eager to visit Libya to work for the development of these relations, which I see will develop for the better because we see them as relations that fulfill joint interests.

He lauded the stand of the Great Jamahiriyah during the Kuwaiti crisis, confirming that contacts between the brother leader of the revolution and the French president during the crisis confirmed a mutual understanding of the realities, as well as their interests in international peace and security. He confirmed that France attaches great importance to this visit because it will be the beginning of bilateral action which contributes to the development of relations between the Great Jamahiriyah and France, and on a higher level. He stressed that France does not see any difficulties within or barriers to these relations, and the way is clear to develop and strengthen them.

Delivers Message to Al-Qadhdhafi

LD2204223791 Tripoli Voice of Greater Arab Homeland in Arabic 2200 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Text] The brother leader of the revolution [Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi] received French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas, who conveyed to him a personal verbal message from French President Francois Mitterrand concerning bilateral relations and some current international issues.

During this meeting, attended by the brother secretary of the General People's Committee for Foreign Liaison and International Cooperation and Thierry de Beauce, the French minister of state for international cultural relations, the good relations which link the Great Jamahiriyah and France and the desire to widen and develop them and continue the dialogue, contact and consultation between the two countries were emphasized.

During the meeting the consequences of the Kuwaiti crisis and the Palestinian and Kurdish issues were discussed. It was stressed that international legitimacy should be applied to all international issues, as it was to the Kuwaiti crisis, and world problems should be solved through peaceful means.

Commentary Alleges U.S.-Iraqi 'Conspiracy'

LD2204163691 Tripoli Voice of Greater Arab Homeland in Arabic 1140 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Unattributed commentary]

[Text] Since the beginning of the great al-Fatih revolution 22 years ago, it has continued warning against the dangers of the political, social, and military vacuum of the Arab nation at every opportunity, at every bilateral or collective meeting, and even in international organizations. It is this vacuum which furnishes the ground for the return of the colonialists at any moment.

The great al-Fatih revolution has also gone beyond the stage of warning by working hard toward filling this vacuum. It has presented a number of practical bilateral and collective drafts for establishing unifying efforts with Egypt, Syria, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, and Sudan as a means for filling this vacuum. The Jamahiriyah has also presented the Arab Union draft, which is the ideal formula for dealing with the sufferings of the Arab nation.

Today despite all the strong warnings and efforts, which were never motivated by ambition but stemmed from a sincere revolutionary vision and deep thinking, we can see that what the great al-Fatih revolution warned against has materialized. We can see an Arab country being occupied and a part of which is being cut off and changed into a colony in an action which contradicts all internationally agreed values and treaties. U.S., British, and French forces have occupied Northern Iraq, including Mosul, capital of the north, and started to build camps in that region on the pretext of protecting the Iraqi citizens. Despite this occupation of the territories, Iraq did not move a muscle. The same applies for the Arab nation and the United Nations.

The news today reported that the U.S. forces, which occupy Northern Iraq, continue their advance in the region without any tangible resistance. The news added that the U.S. military units have deployed in the regions around the city of Zakho, where U.S. camps are being built under the pretext of protecting the Iraqi citizens. The news stressed that faced with that, Baghdad has withdrawn its forces from the aforementioned city and restricted itself to sending approximately 200 policemen to carry out guard duties at joint points.

In a comment on the situation there, Dick Cheney, U.S. defense secretary, referred to the cooperation with the Iraqis and praised it. He said: The Iraqi soldiers are helping us in many cases in discovering the minefields and other things.

What Northern Iraq is exposed to by the U.S., British, and French forces constitutes an unequaled precedent and a violation of international legitimacy, because the citizens whom these forces claim to protect and take as a pretext for occupation are Iraqi citizens and the responsibility for their protection is their own country's and no one else's. Foreign forces camping in another country and taking a part of that country's population and protecting them is something that never happened before and contradicts the most basic conventions.

Northern Iraq is now exposed to a conspiracy which should be exposed and defeated. The situation demands that the Arab nation should heal its wounds and close its ranks. It also demands the establishment of Arab unity, which is the means of salvation and haven of security. The Arab nation should remove the ficticious borders and gates which were created by the colonialists to keep that Arab nation dispersed and torn so that it would always be easy to swallow and occupy. Unity will also fill the political, social, and military vacuum of the Arab nation which was a direct cause of the sufferings of that nation today. The concerned international organizations should also work toward stopping this conspiracy and adopt urgent measures for this purpose.

Sudan

Cairo Paper Reports on Attempted Coup

PM2204152991 Cairo AL-WAFD in Arabic 20 Apr 91 pp 1, 6

[Muhammad 'Ismat report: "New Coup Attempt in Sudan"]

[Text] There was an attempted military coup in Sudan last week. The ruling military regime executed 20 officers of various ranks on the first day of the blessed 'Id al-Fitr on the charge of attempting a coup. The Sudanese authorities arrested Interior Minister Faysal 'Ali Abu-Salih and then placed him under house arrest for opposing the execution of the officers. In the presence of the Sudanese chief of military intelligence and 12 members of the ruling Military Council, the officers were summarily court martialed hours after the coup details were uncovered. The Sudanese authorities have launched an extensive campaign of arrests, which is still continuing, against retired as well as active military personnel.

At emergency meetings held under 'Umar al-Bashir, the Sudanese Military Council decided to form popular defense units from domestic front elements in an attempt to minimize the role of the Armed Forces in the wake of repeated coup attempts. The council also decided to increase the periodic military dismissals to eliminate commanders and ranks. The ruling Islamic Front held urgent contacts with leaders who were abroad asking them to return quickly to support the regime and tackle the deteriorating security situation. The coup attempt occurred on 28 Ramadan [13 April] on the anniversary of the martyrdom of the officers who led the uprising against al-Bashir during Ramadan last year.

onfiscation Denied

EA2304114091 Khartoum SUNA in English 0948 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Text] Khartoum, 22 Apr (SUNA)—Member of the RCC [Revolution Command Council] and chairman of the economic committee, Col Salah al-Karrar, has reaffirmed the revolution's concern. Col Karrar denied the rumours circulation [as received] by particular elements on the government's intention to confiscate citizens' foreign currency account. He confirmed that the revolution is adherent to the implementation of the three-year economic programme, stating that any emergency bottleneck related to the implementation of the programme will be tackled through dialogue and co-ordination between the government and the private sector. Col Karrar meanwhile stressed that the revolution is keen to [see] the solution of the problems that confront the limited income citizen.

Col Karrar criticised the local press for not focusing enough light on the revolution's efforts for realising self-sufficiency in sugar and wheat production as well as the achievements of the social takaful (solidarity) fund.

Minister Says Mengistu Accusations 'Baseless'

EA2204142891 Khartoum SUNA in English 0942 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Text] Khartoum, 22 Apr (SUNA)—Foreign Minister 'Ali Ahmad Sahlul has described accusation by Ethiopian President Mengistu Haile-Mariam that Sudan is backing the Ethiopian and Eritrean movements as justifications by which he is trying to find a way out from the critical crisis that his regime faces these days.

Sahlul, in a speech published by the daily "AL-SUDAN AL-HADITH" today affirmed that Mengistu's allegations were baseless. He indicated that Sudan, since the outbreak of the National Salvation Revolution, has been seeking a final solution to all problems with Ethiopia and that in comply with the good neighbouring policy declared by Gen 'Umar al-Bashir. [sentence as received] The minister went on to say that Mengistu regime has been ignoring Sudan's declared foreign policy and keeping supply the rebel movement of Col John Garang which takes his capital as headquarters for the movement. Sahlul has reiterated that Sudan considers what is going on Ethiopia as an internal matter that is only concerning the Ethiopian people and Sudan doesn't interfere in any country's domestic affairs.

Meanwhile an Eritrean source in Khartoum has denied any assistance to be provided to the EPLF [Eritrean People's Liberation Front] by Sudan, Iraq or Libya as the Ethiopian president alleged during political address last Saturday [as received]. EPLF executive committee member Hamid Himmat told the daily "AL-SUDAN AL- HADITH" that the Ethiopian regime was trying to play down the victories which have been achieved by the

front and the other factions and hint that the victories were achieved under foreign aid.

Army Says SPLA Camp in Blue Nile 'Destroyed'

EA2204104891 Khartoum SUNA in English 1639 GMT 21 Apr 91

[Text] Khartoum, 21 Apr (SUNA)—The government troops stationed in the southern of Blue Nile Province had destroyed last Friday [19 April] a camp for the rebels SPLA [Sudanese People's Liberation Army] inflicting heavy losses on them. A source at the Armed Forces General Command said (?the) Armed Forces seized a huge quantities of ammunition and [words indistinct]. Three military men were slightly injured in the attack, the sources said.

Envoy Discusses Food Problem in Sudan

EA2104163991 Omdurman Domestic Service in Arabic 0430 GMT 21 Apr 91

[Text] His Excellency 'Izz al-Din Hamid, the Sudanesse ambassador in Cairo, has denied in a press statement that a famine exists in Sudan. He said that there were some who kept saying that there was a famine in Sudan. He added that there was no more to this than a mere food gap owing to the scarcity of rains and that measures had been taken to fill the gap by way of self-reliance in domestic production.

He also said that Sudan was self-sufficient in sorghum and nearly so in wheat. He pointed out that wheat production in the last season had reached 800,000 tonnes and that by this quota a fourth or fifth of the [word indistinct] had been attained. On existing cooperation between Sudan and relief agencies, he said that arrangements had been made to eliminate some violations.

Bahrain

Amir Receives Belgian Defense Minister

JN2204160291 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1109 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Excerpt] Manama, 22 Apr (WAKH)—His Highness Shaykh 'Isa Bin-Salman Al Khalifah today received Belgian National Defense Minister Guy Coeme and his delegation.

During the meeting, they reviewed current developments in the region after the liberation of the State of Kuwait and restoration of legitimate authority to it. They also discussed bilateral rlations and issues of mutual interest. [passage omitted]

Official Relations Established With Poland

JN2204161391 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1135 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Text] Manama, 22 Apr (WAKH)—It was officially announced here today that official relations between Bahrain and Poland have been established at ambassadorial level as of today.

A Bahraini Foreign Ministry statement said that these relations have been established based on the principles of the UN Charter and the two country's desire to promote relations of friendship and cooperation between them. Therefore, diplomatic relations at the ambassadorial level have been established.

The statement expressed both Bahrain and Poland's conviction that their decision will contribute to strengthening cooperation between them on the basis of equality, mutual respect for sovereignty, independence and regional security, and non-intervention in each other's internal affairs.

Kuwait

Opposition Prevented From Holding News Conference

JN2204150591 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1347 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Text] Kuwait, 22 Apr (INA)—Sami al-Khatrash, a spokesman for the opposition, has said that members of the Kuwaiti opposition were prevented from holding a news conference today in one of the Kuwaiti capital's hotels.

Al-Khatrash told a group of foreign journalists, who had been informed that the news conference would be held at noon today at the Kuwait International Hotel: We have been prevented from continuing the preparations for holding the news conference and we will inform you of the new date.

The spokesman, who is a member of the Islamic Constitutional Movement [al-harakah al-dusturiyah al-islamiyah], said: The hotel management has refused to allow us to hold the conference. Opposition sources, however, said the instructions were issued by the Information Ministry and that this shows the absence of real democracy in Kuwait.

The cancellation of the press conference follows a statement issued by seven Kuwaiti opposition groups in which they expressed "great disappointment" with the formation of the new government and stressed that "the Kuwaiti public opinion's demands about the need for change were ignored."

Baker Meets With Amir, Security Discussed

LD2204222991 (Clandestine) Radio Kuwait in Arabic 2100 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Text] His Highness the Amir, Shaykh Jabir al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah, held a round of talks with U.S. Secretary of State James Baker, who is on a current visit to the country, this evening. The talks dwelt on bilateral relations during the coming phase, security arrangements in the Gulf region, and the situation in the Middle East in general.

Following the round of talks with the amir, the U.S. secretary of state visited al-Ahmadi District where he witnessed on the spot operations of fighting burning oil wells. Baker is expected to leave the country later on this evening for Damascus.

Envoy Says Iraq Not Implementing Resolution 686

LD2204191491 London KUNA in Arabic 1721 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Text] The United Nations, 22 Apr (KUNA)—Kuwait drew attention today to Iraq's continuous failure to adhere to the articles of UN Security Council Resolution 686, which "puts the credibility and motives of the Iraqi regime under suspicion." According to the aforementioned resolution, Iraq should return all remaining Kuwaiti POW's, whose number is estimated at 5,533. Baghdad should also accept responsibility for all damages and losses that were inflicted on the Kuwaitis and citizens of other countries as a result of the Iraqi invasion and occupation of Kuwait. The resolution also demands that Iraq should return all possessions seized during the occupation, which it has not yet done.

The Kuwaiti complaint came in a message addressed by the Kuwaiti permanent representative to the United Nations, Muhammad Abu al-Hasan, to the chairman of the UN Security Council.

KUNA Headquarters in UK Contacted by Phone

LD2204170991 London KUNA in Arabic 1650 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Text] London, 22 Apr (KUNA)—The first contact between the KUNA headquarters in Kuwait and the temporary headquarters is set up in London to run its operations since the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait last August, took place today.

Barjis Hamud al-Barjis, chairman of the KUNA Board of Directors and its director general, spoke from London with the acting chief editor, Muhammad al-'Ujayri, who remained in Kuwait throughout the Iraqi occupation. Al-'Ujayri told al-Barjis that the Iraqi occupation forces looted all the equipment and furniture in the KUNA headquarters in Kuwait.

Al-Barjis also spoke with colleagues Rashid al-'Aslawi, 'Abd al-Samad al-Shatti, and Walid al-Muzayyin of the Engineering Department.

Governor Cited on Prisoners, Missing in Iraq

LD2104080791 Riyadh Saudi Arabian Television Network in Arabic 1950 GMT 20 Apr 91

[From the "Kuwait Message" program]

[Text] The governor of al-Farwaniyah and acting governor of Kuwait city, Shaykh Ahmad Lahmud al-Sabah, has announced that the number of Kuwaiti prisoneres received from the Iraqi regime so far has reached 6609, among them civilians and military. Shaykh Ahmad Lahmud, who is on the Committee for Prisoner Affairs, said in an interview broadcast by Kuwait television inside Kuwait that the number of prisoners currently detained in Iraqi prisons totals appproximately 5,431. He said the names of 57 martyrs among them have been identified, in addition to approximately 1,200 names of those who are still missing.

Oman

States Choose Representatives to Shura Council

JN2104185891 Muscat Domestic Service in Arabic 1300 GMT 21 Apr 91

[Excerpts] Beginning today, each state of the sultanate will start nominating three representatives to the first Shura Council in Oman's ancient and modern history. His Majesty Sultan Qabus has ordered the formation of this council in his historic speech on 18 November, the anniversary of the glorious National Day. [passage omitted]

Interior Minister Badr Bin-Sa'ud Bin-Harib al-Busa'idi told OMANI NEWS AGENCY that in accordance with the royal directives, the government will not interfere with the nominations. Notables and shaykhs from every state will hold open discussions to choose three representatives. [passage omitted]

Saudi Arabia

Baker Meets With Saudi Foreign Minister

LD2204200291 Riyadh Saudi Arabian Television Network in Arabic 1655 GMT 21 Apr 91

[Text] His Royal Highness Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal, the foreign minister, said that the talks between the custodian of the two holy mosques, King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz al-Sa'ud; with U.S. Secretary of State James Baker focused on the efforts being made to find a just solution to the Palestinian question.

In a statement after his meeting with the U.S. secretary of state today, his highness said the time has come to find peace in the Middle East, to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict, and especially the Palestinian problem. His highness the foreign minister explained that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia backs the American efforts made by President George Bush's government to move forward to achieve peace. He said the government of the custodian of the two holy mosques supports the American peace initiative in the region, and that Saudi Arabia is concerned for the realization of peace and stablity in the Middle East.

To a question on the extent of the participation of the kingdom in the proposed peace conference, His Royal Highness Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal stressed that participation in the traditional meeting should be the right of states directly concerned with the peace talks. He emphasized that the states concerned with participation in the conference are Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, and Israel. His highness affirmed that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia wants a solution to the Palestinian question that will guarantee the rights of the Palestinian people. He also explained that, in this respect, the kingdom supports the United States in its endeavor to secure a peace conference in the region.

His highness the foreign minister added that, in this framework, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia welcomes the international efforts being made to resolve the Palestinian question, and backs the establishment of peace and a comprehensive solution in the region. Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal welcomed the visit of U.S. Secretary of State James Baker, praising his talks with the custodian of the two holy mosques, King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz.

For his part, U.S. Secretary of State James Baker said that His Highness Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal had, in his talks during the meeting, stressed that the Palestinian question should be dealt with, and that an overall solution should be found to the Arab-Israeli conflict. He added that following his talks with his highness the foreign minister, the mission is still focused on a peace conference, and on how the parties to the conflict will sit at the direct negotiations table to resolve the Palestinian issue.

The U.S. secretary of state further said that his mission is still in search of a common ground for the interested parties to sit face to face and deal directly with one another during the expected talks and to find a lasting peace in the Middle East. He pointed out that the situation between the Palestinians and the Israelis must be dealt with, because that is the core of the whole question. Baker also affirmed that the U.S. Government is still examining the situation with the Arab states regarding the participation of these states in the talks, bringing viewpoints closer, and narrowing the differences between the two sides.

Baker expressed his concern over the continuation of the unstable situation in the region, saying that his country is aiming to find a radical solution to the insecure situation.

Official Government Statement Issued

LD2204141491 Riyadh SPA in Arabic 1339 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Text] Riyadh, 22 Apr (SPA)—At the end of U.S. Secretary of State James Baker's visit to the kingdom, the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia issued the following statement:

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia believes that it is high time to work toward ending the Arab-Israeli conflict and achieving a just and comprehensive solution to the Palestinian issue. Therefore, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia supports the efforts made by the United States to convene an early peace conference in order to achieve this goal.

In this context, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia welcomes the U.S. initiative which is based on international legitimacy and which calls for a comprehensive solution in accordance with UN Security Council resolutions 242 and 338.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia supports a just and comprehensive peace in the region, is looking forward to it, and is working for it on the basis of a just solution to the Palestinian issue and an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict in order that security, peace, and stability can prevail in the region and in order that the peoples of the region can enjoy the progress and the prosperity which this conflict has deprived them of during all these past decades.

We must praise the efforts made by his excellency the U.S. secretary of state in this respect and such efforts are worthy of all appreciation.

Baker Ends Visit

LD2204200391 Riyadh SPA in English 1913 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Text] Jeddah, April 22, SPA—James Baker, the U.S. secretary of state left Jeddah this afternoon after a visit to Saudi Arabia.

He was seen off at King 'Abd-al-'Aziz International Airport by Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal, the foreign minister; Gen Salih al-Sida'is, the commander of Western Military Zone; the U.S. ambassador to the kingdom, Charles Freeman, and a number of high-ranking civil and military officials.

Treasury Secretary Brady Meets With Officials

Meets Petroleum Minister

LD1904125691 Riyadh SPA in Arabic 2300 GMT 18 Apr 91

[Text] Jeddah, 18 Apr (SPA)—His Excellency Hisham Nazir, minister of petroleum and mineral resources, and acting minister of planning, today received U.S. Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady.

Economic matters and issues of common interest were discussed during the meeting. The meeting was attended by U.S. ambassador to the kingdom, Charles Freeman.

Talks With Finance Minister

LD2104002591 Riyadh SPA in English 1211 GMT 20 Apr 91

[Text] Jeddah, April 20, SPA—Muhammad Aba-al-Khayl, the minister of finance and national economy, conferred here Friday with Mr Nicholas Brady, the U.S. Treasuary secretary.

Aba-al-Khayl told the SAUDI PRESS AGENCY (SPA) afterwards that during the meeting they discussued the outcome of a meeting held by the coordination committee in Washington on economic impacts of the Iraqi aggression on Kuwait.

The two sides also reviewed possible progress in the functions of the committee after the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) decided to increase support for development projects in Arab states and the development programs declared by the GCC's [Gulf Cooperation Council's] member states in many occasions, he said.

Aba-al-Khayl added that Mr Brady explained during the meeting the international economic trends concerning the reflections of expected increase or decrease of funds available for investment projects in the world besides the outcome of the recent talks held by the seven key industrialist national on the matter.

Aba-al-Khayl highlighted the importance of the matter for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia who is making efforts to increase capital investment and encourage private sector of developed countries for setting up joint productive ventures with the public sector inside the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Aba-al-Khayl termed the meeting as fruitful particularly in view of the important topics to be raised during the next week's joint meetings of the World Bank and the IMF on the economic consequences of the aggression of the Iraqi regime on Kuwait and the availability of necessary funds required for more development projects.

The meeting was attended by Hamad al-Seqayr, the governor of the Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency; Charles Freeman, the U.S. ambassador to the kingdom and a number of senior officials from both sides.

United Arab Emirates

U.S. Treasury Secretary Concludes Talks, Departs

JN2004180091 Manama WAKH in English 1650 GMT 20 Apr 91

[Text] Abu Dhabi, April 20 (GNA)—U.S. Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady today left here after a short visit to the United Arab Emirates during which he held

talks with UAE [United Arab Emirates] Minister of State for Financial and Industrial Affairs Ahmad al-Tayir.

Talks included discussion of economic and financial issues of mutual concern and ways of enhancing them particularly in the fields of investment, as well as financial and monetary cooperation.

The two sides also reviewed the two countries efforts in boosting economic relations in various fields.

Secretary Brady was seen off by al-Tayir and the U.S. ambassador to the UAE Edward Walker.

Belgian National Defense Minister Arrives 22 Apr

JN2204185191 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1755 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Text] Dubai, 22 Apr (WAKH)—Leading a high-powered delegation, Belgian National Defense Minister Guy Coeme arrived in Dubai from Manama this evening.

During the one-day visit to the United Arab Emirates, the Belgian defense minister will discuss bilateral relations with senior officials and explore ways to develop them in the military sphere.

RCC Returns Constitutional Powers to Ministers

JN2304073791 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0615 GMT 23 Apr 91

[Text] Baghdad, 23 Apr (INA)—The Revolution Command Council [RCC] has decided that the Council of Ministers shall exercise its powers provided for in the Constitution and the standing laws and instructions, which were among the powers of the president of the Republic.

In an exclusive report today, the political daily newspaper BABIL said that this was included in Decision No. 97 of 1991, which revoked enforcement of Article No. 2 of RCC Decision No. 764 of 1969, which stipulated the delegation of the Council of Ministers' powers to the president of the Republic.

Kurds Said 'Holding' Ibrahim, Defense Minister

NC2204202891 Paris AFP in English 2017 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Text] Tehran, April 22 (AFP)—Kurdish rebels are "holding" Iraqi deputy leader 'Izzat Ibrahim and the defence minister, Husayn Kamil Hasan, near Irbil, in Iraqi Kurdistan, while talks last with the Baghdad government, a reliable Kurdish source said here Monday.

The two, together with a former Army chief of staff, General Mahir Rashid, were "detained" on Sunday after they travelled to the town and would be held "for as long as the negotiations go on", the source told Agence France-Presse.

"The move was decided on because the Kurds have no confidence in (President) Saddam Husayn. When the negotiations are over, these people will be able to return to Baghdad", the source said.

Mr. Ibrahim, vice chairman of Iraq's ruling Revolutionary Command Council, and Mr. Hasan, a nephew of Mr. Husayn, "took part in the negotiations (in Baghdad) until Sunday, but they came to Kurdistan together on Monday and the peshmergas (guerrillas) have decided to keep them".

According to the source, the talks between the rebels and the government were scheduled to take place alternately in Baghdad and Kurdistan.

On Sunday, a non-Iraqi source in Baghdad said that Mr. Ibrahim was heading the government delegation to the talks and that Mr. Hasan was also among the negotiators.

Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz and Defense Minister Ali Hasan al-Majid were also taking part, the source said, although since the negotiations began just over a week ago very few details on the talks have emerged.

The talks, attended by representatives of the Democratic Party of Kurdistan and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, are said to be based on the March 11, 1970 agreements which promised autonomy to the Kurds while insisting that Kurdistan remained an integral part of Iraq.

'Rioters' Admit Receiving Instructions 'From Abroad'

JN2204183691 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1813 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Text] Baghdad, 22 Apr (INA)—Baghdad television tonight showed two of the rioters who perpetrated acts of murder and sabotage on the national economy.

They admitted that they took advantage of the circumstances of the aggressive war against Iraq to commit acts of murder, rape, and looting of public and private property.

They stressed that they received instructions from abroad to carry out these criminal acts.

Hammadi Views Efforts To Meet Fuel Needs

JN2304124291 Baghdad INA in English 1130 GMT 23 Apr 91

[Text] Baghdad, Apr.23, INA—Dr. Sa'dun Hammadi, prime minister said that strenuous efforts are under way to meet the needs of the citizens for fuels and power energy.

Speaking in the course of a meeting with workers unionist leaders, Dr. Hammadi stressed significance of the role undertaken by the workers in the reconstruction process of what was devastated by the war and acts of sabotage.

The prime minister added that the General Federation of Trade Unions is a democratic popular organization that carries out its role and duties in accordance with the law.

AL-THAWRAH Praises RCC Amnesty Action

JN2304071891 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0635 GMT 23 Apr 91

[Text] Baghdad, 23 Apr (INA)—The newspaper AL-THAWRAH has said that the agent saboteurs fell into the abyss when they sought refuge with the foreign forces believing that these forces would protect them from the people's anger.

In its editorial today, the paper adds: The ordeal has eased, the scum has disappeared, the Iraqi people have overcome the crisis, and the doors have opened for Iraqis to contribute to the battle of reconstruction, except for those who sold their homeland and attempted to destroy Iraq, divide it, and spread confusion and destruction within it.

The paper says that the foreigner began to abandon his agents and withdraw protection from them after using them to achieve his objectives, and after they became a burden to him. The paper stresses that the agent saboteurs have fallen into this impasse.

The paper adds: The Revolution Command Council's [RCC] decision granting general amnesty to all Iraqis whether in northern, southern, or central Iraq coincides with the restoration of basic services, which had suffered some shortages. This coincidence bestows further delight and optimism on the Iraqi people and promotes their confidence in the soundness and seriousness of the measures taken by their wise and historic leadership.

The paper stresses that the RCC decision is the correct prelude and a necessary step to building the new stage and reinforcing national unity. This decision helps to consolidate the pillars of security and stability in the country.

Paper Praises Oil Refineries' 'Splendid Results'

JN1604113191 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0928 GMT 16 Apr 91

[Text] Baghdad, 16 Apr (INA)—The newspaper AL-QADISIYAH states that the loftiness of the great edifice Iraq built over two decades, horrifying the imperialists, traitors, and conspirators, was one of the reasons for the aggression that 30 countries launched against Iraq.

The paper, mouthpiece of the Iraqi Ministry of Defense, adds in an article today that the invaders and traitors sought by their aggression to extinguish the torch of vigor reflecting the firm willpower, vibrant and alive, within the Iraqis' hearts.

The paper goes on to say: Through sincere endeavors, cooperation, and solidarity, the Iraqis will face the impossible, surmount the difficulties, and continue creative endeavors in various spheres. The outcome of the activities the teams operating in the refineries of al-Dawrah and Bayji have carried out has come as a surprise to us. A similarly amazing performance is expected at numerous institutions that provide citizens with daily services. Thus, reconstruction will be one of the firm and strong pillars of our future policy.

AL-QADISIYAH asserts that rebuilding what the aggression destroyed is not impossible. The paper adds: To achieve this objective, we will depend on the Iraqis' creative potential and inventiveness which is well known to those near and afar; their creativity dates back to ancient times. As for the Iraqis' contributions to civilization, people everywhere in the world have benefited from these contributions.

The paper goes on to say: In no time and notwithstanding the short time involved, the magnitude of destruction caused, and the circumstances that preceded, accompanied, and followed the aggression, the Iraqis are capable of rebuilding what the aggression destroyed and making immense and real sacrifices.

Concluding the article, AL-QADISIYAH says: The splendid results attained by those working at the refineries have been reached thanks to the collective efforts made and also to the fact that officials left their offices and gave priority to field work. This is undoubtedly good news.

Kurdish Leader on Demands Made at Baghdad Talks

NC2304061991 Paris AFP in English 0555 GMT 23 Apr 91

[Text] Piranshahr, Iran, April 23 (AFP)—A Kurdish rebel leader negotiating with Baghdad for autonomy says the Kurds "will not sign any agreement that does not include international guarantees."

Mas'ud Barzani, president of the Democratic Party of Kurdistan, said the Kurdistan Front, which groups most Kurdish organizations, wanted "more than anything some international guarantees."

He spoke to journalists on Monday at the Iraqi village of Haj 'Umran border during a visit by Danielle Mitterrand, wife of the French president, who heads France-Libertes, a humanitarian relief organization.

Speaking of the talks going on in Baghdad, Mr. Barzani said, "Whether they're about the 1970 agreement (which gave autonomy to three provinces but that Kurds say was not implemented) or whether they're about something better, they must include international guarantees on the return of the refugees or the creation of safe corridors."

He said about 1.2 million refugees were at the Iranian and Turkish borders, with Kurdish towns virtually abandoned by their populations.

80,000 Marshland Refugees in 'Appalling' State

LD2204200991 Tehran IRIB Television Second Program Network in Persian 1700 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Text] While the issue of Iraqi refugees in the north of that country has received extensive coverage worldwide and has attracted the attention of world public opinion, the existence of hundreds of thousands of refugees in southern Iraq has been forgotten.

A source close to the Iraqi opposition in southern Iraq declared that at the moment more than 80,000 people in southern Iraq who have been forced to leave their homes and are living in appalling circumstances in the marshlands of southern Iraq. This Iraqi source added that the adverse climate of the marshlands, the lack of means of survival, shortages of food and medicine and diseases that are peculiar to this swampy terrain, have caused a large number of refugee deaths, including children and the elderly.

According to this Iraqi opposition source, the Ba'thist forces—by bringing the southern borders under their strict control—have prevented the refugees from seeking sanctuary in neighboring countries at a time when, up to now, tens of thousands of southern Iraqi refugees have been able to cross the border into Iran. Right now southern Iraqi refugees have been housed in some regions of the southern provinces of our country, but despite the unceasing efforts by officials and the unstinting support of our compatriots, they are still in need of various kinds of assistance.

Opposition Forces Attack Troops, Party Meeting

NC2204172191 (Clandestine) Voice of Rebellious Iraq in Arabic 1426 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Text] According to our media sources, the revolutionary forces have mounted a coordinated attack on the (al-Shihamah) area in Shaykh Sa'd district. The sources said that the Saddam regime's forces fled in disarray at the start of the surprise attack and the revolutionaries were able to liberate and take control of the entire area after purging it of

the remnants of the enemy forces. The enemy forces abandoned a large amount of equipment and weapons, which was seized by the revolutionary forces.

Meanwhile, our media sources have reported that a jihad unit of our brother revolutionaries carried out an armed attack on the Ba'th Party headquarters in Qarmat 'Ali City last week, inflicting heavy losses of life and property on the enemy.

According to a report by our media sources today, the revolutionaries planned the attack to coincide with a meeting of senior officials of the Qarmat 'Ali party organization. Their plan succeeded, and they fired at their target before the meeting was over. Their blow struck everyone at the meeting and up to the time they withdrew from the scene, the brother revolutionaries had not observed any movement at the headquarters that would indicate anyone who was at the meeting was still alive.

Opposition Reports Attack on Military Convoy

NC2204172391 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Opposition in Arabic 1500 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Formerly Voice of Free Iraq]

[Text] The masses of the uprising in the south attacked a military convoy belonging to the tyrant's forces early this week. The convoy was heading for al-Basrah to reinforce the tyrant's forces which are experiencing difficult conditions in view of the surprise attacks being launched against them, especially at night.

The masses burned two troop carriers and inflicted heavy damage on it. The masses also attacked some assembly points for the tyrant's forces in the city of 'Ali al-Gharbi, clashed with the regime's forces, and inflicted losses on them.

Opposition Radio Reports Attacks in Abu al-Khasib

NC2204201391 (Clandestine) Voice of Rebellious Iraq in Arabic 1926 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Excerpts] A revolutionary has staged a daring operation on a central position of the henchmen of the outcast Saddamist regime in the city of Abu al-Khasib in southern Iraq.

The mujahid revolutionary attacked the headquarters of the Abu al-Khasib district officer with an RPG at noon last Friday. Heavy damage was inflicted on the building and a number of criminals were killed.

According to our sources, the regime was forced to move the headquarters to another location in light of the heavy damage to the building. [passage omitted]

Meanwhile, a revolutionary fedayeen group infiltrated positions of Saddam's mercenaries in Abu al-Khasib district and attacked several military positions of Saddam's forces with machine guns and hand grenades.

Our sources report that the operation, which took place last week, was carried out at night and caused heavy losses among the enemy's ranks. The group returned safely to base.

Refugees Report Continuing Clashes in South

LD2304124191 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 23 Apr 91

[Excerpt] Nightly clashes between the Iraqi people and the Republican Guard are continuing. According to IRNA, Iraqi refugees who sought safety in Iran via the southern borders yesterday and last night said: During the past two nights, popular forces have attacked Iraqi Army positions in al-Basrah, al-Tannumah, and al-Qurnah, killing a number of troops and destroying their military equipment.

Iraqi refugees spoke of increased attacks by opposition forces on Ba'thist forces and said: Republican Guard forces continue to use people as human shields to protect themselves. One of the Iraqi refugees stated: The opposition also has identified and executed a large number of Ba'thist forces who took part in mass arrests and killings.

Another Iraqi refugee said: Because of fear of popular attacks at night, Iraqi forces based in al-Basrah, al-Tannumah, al-Qurnah, al-'Amarah, al-Nasiriyah, al-Zubayr, and Abu-al-Khasib launched flares to light up the area surrounding them. According to the same report, several explosions in southern Iraq were heard yesterday on the border near Salamcheh. [passage omitted]

Al-Mudarrisi Rejects Negotiations With Saddam

NC2104161491 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Opposition in Arabic 1500 GMT 21 Apr 91

[Formerly Voice of Free Iraq]

[Text] Ayatollah Muhammad Taqyi al-Mudarrisi, leader of the Islamic Action Organization, has stated that he refuses to enter into any negotiations with the tyrant's regime. He also said that fighting is continuing in the cities of al-Basrah, al-Tannumah, and Karbala'.

Al-Mudarrisi said that tyrant Saddam Husayn is a war criminal who must be punished and no negotiations should be held with him or his regime. He did not refer directly to the talks under way between some Kurds under Jalal Talabani and the tyrant's regime, but he asked: How could anyone negotiate with the man who destroyed Iraq and humiliated the Iraqis? He added that there should be no negotiations with killer Saddam and that the Iraqis will accept nothing less than his trial and punishment.

Reaction to Palestinian-Baker Talks Reported

Al-Husayni Comments

TA2204163591 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1605 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Excerpt] What are the Palestinians saying about the Baker peace plan as published by THE NEW YORK TIMES? They want to wait for an official U.S. peace plan and not rely on newspaper reports, Faysal al-Husayni told our correspondent Arye Gus this evening:

Faysal al-Husayni, who headed the Palestinian delegation to talks with U.S. Secretary Baker, said that if we rely on newspaper reports, then the Baker plan, as published by THE NEW YORK TIMES, offers even less than the spirit of the questions the U.S. presented to Israel. Al-Husayni referred in particular to the issue of Palestinian representation: part of the Jordanian delegation or a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation? He said that whatever the case, we must wait for an official U.S. peace plan and not rely on newspaper reports. We will wait for the U.S. position to be announced and the PLO stand to be decided at the Palestinian Central Council now convening in Tunis. The Central Council of course arouses interest among the Palestinian community in the territories since it is the first meeting of a high-level Palestinian institution since the Gulf war, especially since Baker began his tours and peace plans. [passage omitted]

Bethlehem Mayor Interviewed

TA2204192291 Jerusalem Israel Television Network in English 1520 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Interview with Bethlehem Mayor Ilyas Frayj by Steve Edwards on 22 April in the mayor's office—recorded]

[Text] [Edwards] Mr. Frayj, Secretary Baker will be returning tomorrow for more talks in Jerusalem. Do you anticipate further talks with a Palestinian delegation?

[Frayj] Mr. Baker has no time to waste. His coming back is very welcome. He is a very energetic, determined person, and I feel optimistic about his visit. I hope that there will be another meeting with the Palestinians, even through I know nothing about it.

[Edwards] How do you consider the reentry of Jordan into the peace process?

[Frayj] It is imperative for Jordan to be part of the peace process if there is to be peace in this region. Jordan is an integral part and the Palestinians are an integral part. Israel is an integral part. The three parties must talk together about a peaceful settlement. I am very happy that Secretary Baker met with his majesty, King Husayn, and that the talks were more or less good.

[Edwards] How do you consider the possibility of a Jordanian- Palestinian joint delegation?

[Frayj] Well, this has to be negotiated between the Palestinians and the Government of Jordan. In principle, to have a unified team is better than, rather than, to have two separate teams. After all we and the Jordanians have one issue and two aims, to liberate the occupied territories and to make peace with Israel. So to be united.... [sentence as heard]

Settlement Set Up 'Secretly' Near Ramallah

TA2304054191 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 23 Apr 91 pp A1, 4

[Report by Yizhar Be'er]

[Excerpts] On the eve of U.S. Secretary of State James Baker's visit to Israel, a new settlement was secretly set up in the West Bank, about 10 km northwest of Ramallah. The move to the new site, called Talmon Bet, started Sunday night [21 April]. Construction work has been going on around the clock with the knowledge of IDF [Israel Defense Forces] authorities.

Seven mobile homes were brought to the site early Monday morning, and people began to move into them yesterday. The new settlement is being set up by Amana, Gush Emunim's settlement movement. It is located some 2 km north of the settlement of Talmon, in a site that has not been previously approved by the government. In spite of the big distance between Talmon and the new settlement, Amana argues that Talmon Bet is not an independent settlement, but a new neighborhood of an existing settlement.

Amana has spared no efforts to keep the construction work secret, and the topography of the area helps. The only road leading to Talmon, which is located on a high mountain, splits close to the entrance to the settlement into a dirt road which continues until it disappears beyond the mountain range on which Talmon is built. Yesterday afternoon this road was barricaded with empty barrels and two standing army soldiers were keeping watch.

In addition to the soldiers, a few settlers were also watching over the entrance. Talmon's security officer claimed that the blocked road was merely the rear access road to Talmon, and he categorically denied that it led to the new construction site. As for why the road had been blocked, he said that the area is off limits to strangers after 1600 "for security reasons." The soldiers, on the other hand, claimed that they had been ordered to keep strangers out of the area 24 hours a day.

The assumption that the blocked road leads to the construction site of the new settlement was later confirmed by neighboring Arab villagers from al-Janiyah. They said that mobile homes had been arriving at the new settlement through the night and that all day yesterday trucks and vans had been delivering the household belongings of the new settlers. Two young Arab villagers led the HA'ARETZ correspondent through the mountains to a mountaintop from which the new settlement site could clearly be seen.

There were seven mobile homes on the site, and tractors and bulldozers were intensively working the ground. The youngsters said that two days earlier the hill had been

completely bare and there had not been even one mobile home on it. They said the workers building the settlement had been brought from the Hebron Hills area, and that laborers from their village had not been employed for fear that they might be murdered by the local strike forces.

Villagers from 'Ayn 'Arik also recounted that on the night between Sunday and Monday seven semitrailer tractors had driven through their village on their way to Talmon pulling mobile homes.

This move is compatible with the Amana's policy of expanding and building new neighborhoods in existing settlements. However, because of the relatively long distance between the new site and Talmon, it would seem that a new settlement is being set up on the site. A deep ravine separates the two settlements, creating a distance of several kilometers between the two points. [passage omitted]

Amana's reaction to the reports about the establishment of the new settlement could not be obtained yesterday. The IDF spokesman, who was also asked to react, did not respond to HA'ARETZ's queries.

[Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew at 0405 GMT on 23 April carries a telephone interview with Pinhas Wallerstein, the chairman of the Binyamin Regional Council, by anchor Hayim Zissowitz on the reports that new housing units were brought to the settlement of Talmon. Wallerstein replies that to his regret this is not a new settlement. Admitting that "we have indeed brought some structures to the permanent site of Talmon," he claims that this followed receipt of "all the licenses." He adds: "Although I would be happy to set up a new settlement, in the current situation we are forced only to expand existing settlements. This is what we are doing."]

In addition to Talmon Bet, a settlement drive is under way in all other settlements in the area. Ten new mobile homes have recently been moved to Dolev, and in Yad Ya'ir—an area of 1,000 dunam, which was expropriated after Ya'ir Mendelson, an inhabitant of Dolev, was murdered in an ambush—work is under way to build a settlement that would be manned by Nahal Brigade soldiers. The Construction and Housing Ministry and the Public Works Department are paving a wide asphalt road bypassing the villages of al-Janiyah and Ra's Karkar.

A Palestinian source in Jerusalem noted yesterday that work is also under way to expand Ari'el and Dotan. Near Dotan, south of Nabulus, bulldozers have been seen leveling an area of 10 dunam. Another 100 dunam have been fenced with barbed wire near the town of Ari'el.

Area Declared 'Closed Military Zone'

TA2304071391 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0630 GMT 23 Apr 91

[Text] The vicinity of the settlement of Talmon near Ramallah has been declared a closed military zone. Peace Now demonstrators who came to the site have been evacuated. Earlier, a scuffle broke out in the area between the demonstrators and the settlers. One of the demonstrators sustained slight injuries, and a foreign cameraman claims that he was beaten and that his camera was confiscated by the settlers.

Sharon: U.S. Knows Settlement 'Crucial'

TA2304092791 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 0900 GMT 23 Apr 91

[Text] Minister Ari'el Sharon has announced that the report of a new settlement being set up in Talmon is not true. What is happening is that the existing settlement is being fleshed out at the location that will be the settlement's permanent site, he said. In the opinion of the construction and housing minister, there is no room for a confrontation with the United States on the matter, because we have made it plain to the United States that settlement is a crucial component of our national security. Likewise, there is no way to punish Israel and there is no room for threats. The construction and housing minister was touring Druze settlements in the Galilee this morning. His remarks were reported by Shmu'el Tal.

Ministry Plans New Structures in Settlements

TA2304114691 Tel Aviv DAVAR in Hebrew 23 Apr 91 p 1

[Report by Mikhal Sela']

[Text] A follow-up report drafted by the Construction and Housing Ministry's Immigrant Housing Administration indicates that as part of its financial allocation for construction work for new immigrants, the ministry plans to set up soon in the territories 999 mobile homes, 3,680 smaller mobile homes, 974 light structures, and 6,000 cabins.

As part of the move to flesh out the settlements in the territories, several dozen additional mobile homes and prefabs were brought to various settlements all over the West Bank.

Eight mobile homes were brought to Talmon, a two-year-old religious-communal settlement north of Dolev. About three weeks ago another 12 structures were brought to the place, Pinhas Wallerstein, the chairman of the Mate Binyamin Regional Council, told DAVAR. There are presently 27 families in Talmon.

Some 20 mobile homes were brought to Bet El yesterday.

In most settlements, the mobile homes are being brought these days in the hope of increasing the potential for absorption, and there are no families waiting to move into them.

There are currently approximately 70 families in the bloc of settlements in the vicinity of Talmon. "After the death of Ya'ir Mendelson, we decided to conduct a summer campaign to increase the size of the population in the region," said Wallerstein.

MK's Charge Mortgage Policy Favors Settlement

TA2204105491 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 22 Apr p 10

[Report by Jon Immanuel]

[Excerpt] The value of mortgages given to Israelis who settle in the West Bank have virtually doubled in the past year in relation to mortgages provided to young couples in most towns within the Green Line, according to a report by MKs [Knesset Members] Dedi Zucker (Citizens Rights Movement) and Hayim Oron (Mapam) [United Workers Party].

In one example, the report claimed that a couple who opted for 'Eli, south of Nabulus, would today receive a mortgage of NIS [new Israeli shekels] 142,000, of which NIS 108,000 would be interest-free. A Jerusalem couple could hope for a mortgage of NIS 80,000, of which NIS 20,000 would be interest-free.

In Efrat, just a 15-minute drive from Jerusalem, the report said that mortgages are about NIS 85,000 interest-free and NIS 125,000 in total. These are about the same conditions as those given to couples who go to live in the Negev development town of Yeruham.

Zucker told THE JERUSALEM POST yesterday that he believes Housing Minister Ari'el Sharon is responsible for the increasing differential and that its purpose was to encourage settlement in the territories at the expense of towns inside Israel. [passage omitted]

Ministry Denies Discrimination

TA2304085491 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 23 Apr 91 p A4

[Report by Yizhar Be'er]

[Excerpt] The Construction and Housing Ministry claims that there is no discrimination favoring settlers in the territories over people residing elsewhere in Israel. Reacting to the report drafted by Knesset Members Hayim Oron and Dedi Zucker, the ministry argues that mortgages to settlers beyond the Green Line are granted according to fixed criteria, such as the distance from the center of the country and other environmental and physical characteristics that determine the value of the mortgages. "The criteria that apply to Judaea, Samaria, and the Gaza District are the same that apply to all other locations in Israel," ministry officials claim. [passage omitted]

Authorities Said Blocking Roads, Uprooting Trees

TA2304112091 Tel Aviv DAVAR in Hebrew 23 Apr 91 p 2

[Report by Mikhal Sela']

[Text] The uprooting of trees to make way for the paving of roads to settlements continues in the West Bank. In most cases, the roads are being paved without notifying land and orchard owners in advance and without any visible expropriation activity. The uprooting of trees and land expropriation is the issue that most troubles the inhabitants of the West Bank at present.

Twenty olive trees were uprooted this week in the neighborhood of Rafidiyah, in west Nabulus, apparently as part of the work to pave the Tulkarm-Nabulus bypass road. Seventy olive, pine, and other trees were uprooted in the village of Jit, and 50 olive trees were uprooted in Dayr al-Hatab.

In the past few months the defense establishment has been placing roadblocks and barricades throughout the West Bank, splitting it into small areas separated from each other. People are not allowed to cross those barriers unless they have special permits.

People are held up at roadblocks manned by soldiers and policemen, who check their papers and decide on a whim who will and who will not be allowed to pass.

In various locations, the security forces have blocked the main entrances to villages with mounds of soil. In Sinjil, which is served by a single road that leads to four other villages, private cars and trucks were confiscated. The owners were ordered to hand over their driving licenses and to leave their vehicles on the road so as to block the entrance completely.

Those restrictions have had a severe effect on the economy and the education system, and have aroused the resentment and fury of the population in the territories.

On the economic level, because of the restrictions on the departure for work in Israel, job seekers try to find jobs in the West Bank. Due to the restrictions on movement, however, an unemployed person from Nabulus, for example, cannot take a job in Hebron.

On the educational level, students and teachers cannot get to their schools, high schools in particular. Bethlehem and Ramallah have been particularly affected, because, in addition to the roadblocks, there has been an ongoing ban on inhabitants of the West Bank entering Jerusalem.

Shamir Interviewed on Palestinian Issue

PM2304104091 Paris LE MONDE in French 23 Apr 91 p 2

[Marek Halter article: "Israel After the Scuds"]

[Excerpt] [passage omitted] Before 1948, Yitzhaq Shamir was called Michael in his clandestine role as a fighter against the British—a name chosen in tribute to Irish Republican Army founder Michael Collins, "killed by his people for trying to accept a compromise." He now feels he is fulfilling his role as prime minister in the proper way. He finds it difficult to understand all the fuss about Israel.

"Why is everybody interfering in our affairs? Why does France dream of playing a role in our region?" he asked. "Why all this passion...?"

Why indeed. Israel, which is 27,500 sq km, the size of Brittany, is one of the smallest states in the world. The

conflict between it and the Arab states and the Palestinian people is certainly tragic, but it is much less violent than the conflicts in Tibet, Timor, Lebanon, or Kurdistan. The lack of oil strips this conflict of an economic dimension, and the presence of all the monotheistic religions in Jerusalem does not justify anything—Jerusalem is only Islam's third holy city, and Christianity's second; the days of the Crusades and even jihads is over.

That leaves the Jews. Do they, as Menahem Begin believed, arouse the same unhealthy curiosity, the same atavistic animosity as they aroused as a minority scattered among the nations? Menahem Begin was no doubt extrapolating, but if that were the case, the Jews would have deserved it. By invoking universal values on which they claim to base their state, they authorize individuals and states to question them in the name of those values, even if those men and states do not respect them themselves.

Yitzhaq Shamir denied that: Israel is just another state. "And people should stop giving us advice. Anybody concerned about peace in our region would have done better to persuade the Palestinians to accept the Camp David agreements. They made provision for a five-year period of autonomy followed by negotiations on a definitive status. Twelve years have already passed. The Palestinians could have achieved their self-determination long ago...."

According to Ilyas Frayj, that view is shared by Egyptian President Husni Mubarak, with whom the Mayor of Bethlehem had a meeting in Cairo last month. "The Palestinians," according to the rais, "are like a passenger waiting for the train on the station platform, ticket in hand. The first train arrives, he does not take it, promising himself he will board the next one. He allows the second one to go, saying he will take the third. He does not board the third either and waits for the fourth.... A dozen trains have left and the passenger is still waiting on the station platform, ticket in hand...." That evening, I told the story to [Arab Studies Institute Director] Faysal al-Husayni. He is an elegant 40-year-old man, dressed in Western bourgeois style, balding, wearing a burgundy necktie and a newly pressed suit. It was the end of Ramadan and his large house in East Jerusalem was packed with people. There were 20 people waiting in one room, 10 in another, and the fax, placed next to a model of the Temple Mount mosque, produced a constant stream of messages. Since U.S. Secretary of State James Baker has chosen him as an interlocutor, he is regarded here as having been "invested" as spokesman for the internal Palestinians and his house is always full.

Surrounded by visitors, he replied:

"This time, we will not miss the train."

"This time, there will not be a train," I told him. "The Jerusalem-Tel Aviv service has been canceled. All that is left are the tracks, overgrown with weeds....."

"Well, we will take the plane," Faysal al-Husayni said with a broad smile.

I could not help thinking that an air ticket costs much more....

Some young leaders of the intifadah have realized that and are prepared to pay the price. Radi Jarra'i is one of them. In an article published by weekly AL-FAJR, which is close to the PLO, he quite simply demands the dissolution of the Palestine National Council, which has its headquarters in Tunis, in order to introduce democracy into PLO bodies and ensure fairer and greater participation for the inhabitants of the territories in the organization's political decisions. He also advocates the rapid formation of the provisional government in exile comprising credible people capable of making realistic proposals to the Israeli leaders. Hanna Sinyurah, editor of the publication, his eyes glinting behind his horn-rimmed spectacles, is proud of having opened the first real debate in the occupied territories. It was in the newspaper's offices, which occupy a whole building in East Jerusalem, that I met with Ilyas Frayj, mayor of Bethlehem.

Has the Gulf War opened up new prospects for peace between Israel and the Arab countries? He thinks so. And with the Palestinians? He is not sure. "Shamir is bogged down in his own inconsistencies," he said. "He claims that everything is negotiable but promises never to leave the territories...."

When questioned about this, Yitzhaq Shamir saw no inconsistency in it: "Menahem Begin promised the Palestinians autonomy.... I am offering them self-government. In other words, for five years they will have all the prerogatives of a state, aside from an army and foreign policy. After five years, when we have learned to live side by side in peace, we will negotiate definitive agreements...."

What definitive agreement could you negotiate if you refuse in advance even a partial withdrawal from the territories?

(Yitzhaq Shamir smiled—LE MONDE editor's note) "It is true, I said that, because I am honest. But there is no inconsistency. I am simply saying that I, with my history, and the idea I have of my country, will never abandon the territories. I would not like to go down in history as the man who sold off part of Israel. And because Israel is a democratic country and I was elected by the majority of its population, that position is now my government's position. But I am a realist: I know that I am an old man. I am 76 years old, and in five years' time I will certainly no longer be in office. There is reason to think that the man who succeeds me might accept territorial concessions in exchange for peace. So, when I say that after five years of self-government the Palestinians and Israelis will be able to negotiate on all solutions without exception, I am telling the truth." [passage omitted]

Netanyahu: Arab Radicalism Cause of Dispute

TA2304061591 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 0405 GMT 23 Apr 91

[Telephone interview with Deputy Foreign Minister Binyamin Netanyahu by anchor Hayim Zissowitz and political correspondent Arye Golan—live]

[Text] [Zissowitz] Good morning, Deputy Foreign Minister Binyamin Netanyahu.

[Netanyahu] Good morning.

[Zissowitz] Judging by what we hear about the Arab countries' replies to Secretary of State Baker, would you say there is any indication of a positive trend or any hint of a possibility that Israel and the Arab countries could reach a compromise on the convocation of a regional conference to promote the peace process?

[Netanyahu] First of all, I suggest that we allow Secretary Baker to come and brief us on his latest talks today in Damascus. Naturally we also want to hear about his earlier talks. I fear, however, that from what has come to my attention, people may lose their perspective. We must realize what the real obstacle to peace is. It is not territories or Palestinians. Neither created the state of war which the Arabs still maintain against us. I stress: Israel has not forced war upon the Arabs for half a century; on the contrary. We, of course, would like to give you an answer and be able to say whether a fundamental change has occurred in the Arab world following the Gulf war. So far we cannot say that there are real substantial changes in their positions, because we have not yet received any indications thereof. We hear mostly about the questions presented to Israel, but I believe the whole world must present one firm question to the Arab world: Are you prepared to end the state of war against Israel and recognize its right to exist as the basis for negotiations with us?

[Golan] You know, Deputy Minister Netanyahu, that Israel was also given one main basic question to answer: Will you be prepared to cede territories in exchange for peace? This morning we read about a lengthy interview Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir granted to Marek Halter, a French journalist for LE MONDE, in which he said that he would never give up territories; his successors may do so, but he will not. The question is whether in this matter of principle we are not alone against the whole world, including the United States?

[Netanyahu] First of all, we have stood alone against the whole world on many occasions, I regret to say. We do not want that, but not always is the world's diagnosis of Middle East problems accurate. When we bombed Saddam Husayn's nuclear reactor in 1981, we stood alone against the whole world. The whole world condemned us and cried out, yet our analysis was correct. Now again the Arabs feign innocence and say: We are ready for peace, except you must first pledge to withdraw from the territories. Well, even when they were in control of those territories, they launched wars against us. If anyone today wants to believe that just handing over the territories overlooking Tel Aviv and Haifa will lead to peace, I must say the problem is far deeper and more basic. It involves the Arab political tradition as directed by radical centers, which have not yet accepted Israel's existence. We must attack this axis right from the start. Israel must not make a priori concessions in negotiations.

[Zissowitz] According to THE NEW YORK TIMES, this issue of territory for peace will be presented to Israel during the second stage of the regional conference. That will then be the crucial question. That being the case, would Israel at all be prepared to engage in a two-stage regional conference?

[Netanyahu] First of all, we have always said that in future negotiations the Arabs will raise their territorial demands, as will Israel. I therefore see nothing new in this.

As for the phased approach, I think that people must realize that although we are in a state of war—or, to be more precise, a territorial dispute—with our neighboring countries, we are, in fact, in a state of war with the entire Arab world. You currently have, for example, a situation in which missiles were shot at us, as in the last war, from a country that does not have a common border with us. Our problem, consequently, is with the entire Arab world. We would like to have peace negotiations with the entire Arab world, and more importantly—to repeat what I have just said—the entire world. It seems to me that the entire world must demand of the Arab world, the Arab countries, that they terminate the state of war, because not only would that be just, but it would also be pragmatically correct and would prevent the possibility of another war.

[Golan] But, Deputy Minister Netanyahu, in more practical terms, let us take THE NEW YORK TIMES reports. Will Israel in fact be ready to join two conferences, one involving a more limited forum and a one-time event with Israel and the Arab countries with which we share a border to provide a political solution to the process; and the other a broader forum, in fact an apolitical UN-sponsored international conference, a conference to resolve ecological problems such as water, demilitarization, and broader and more general matters?

[Netanyahu] We have no objection to discussing environmental issues, including demilitarization and Middle East disarmament. We are open to those ideas and have ideas of our own. We will hear the proposals brought before us and will also submit our own ideas on the matter.

[Zissowitz] Thank you very much, Deputy Foreign Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, and have a good morning.

[Netanyahu] Good morning.

[Zissowitz] Thanks also to our political correspondent Arye Golan.

Shamir Affirms Commitment to Eretz Yisra'el

TA2204110391 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1000 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Text] Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir believes that the regional peace conference should not last beyond the opening session of negotiations between Israel and its neighbors. The prime minister made this clear this morning during his meeting with members of the Tehiya party. Shamir also expressed determined opposition to the inclusion of a representative from East Jerusalem in the talks with Israel. Our party affairs correspondent Yaron Deqel reports:

During his meeting with Tehiya leaders, the prime minister made an effort to allay their concerns. He reiterated his opposition to the formula of territories for peace, and his commitment to the idea of Eretz Yisra'el. Shamir said that he would remain true to those positions in responding to the questions currently under discussion in the political negotiations. Yitzhaq Shamir is opposed to the participation of an East Jerusalem representative in the Palestinian delegation to the talks. Furthermore, as far as the prime minister is concerned, the regional conference is designed to be merely an opening session before bilateral talks.

Nevertheless, our correspondent Sarit Mikha'eli sensed Minister Yuval Ne'eman's concern upon leaving the meeting.

[Begin recording] [Ne'eman] We are worried by a series of rumors in the media according to which the United States is exerting pressure to turn the regional meeting into some kind of conference that will continue, as well as a whole line of issues that caused us concern.

[Mikha'eli] Did anything in the prime minister's answers seem to imply any possible steps or compromises that would be unacceptable to you?

[Ne'eman] Not at this stage. The prime minister also reiterated his opposition to the principle of territories for peace. His interpretation of Resolutions 242 and 338 is also acceptable to us. [end recording]

It should be noted, therefore, that despite the threats voiced by the Tehiya party yesterday, there is no danger to the continued existence of the government.

[Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew at 1005 GMT on 22 April carries a report by Gil Litman about a subsequent meeting held by the prime minister with the heads of Jewish local authorities and settlements in Judaea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip. Upon emerging from the Prime Minister's Office, Tzvi Katzover, head of the Qiryat Arba' local council, said that Yitzhaq Shamir had told them "that Israel has given its promise to the Americans not to direct immigrants to the territories. The prime minister stated that he would indeed abide by its promise, and would not direct immigrants to settle beyond the Green Line."

[Asked whether the prime minister had made them any promise, Katzover says Shamir had told them "the government would do everything it can without breaking its promises to various parties around the world."]

Arens Wants Return to Territories Election Plan

TA2204191091 Jerusalem Israel Television Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Report by political correspondent 'Imanu'el Halperin]

[Text] The Israeli leadership is not presenting a homogeneous position in its talks with Baker, and the differences are not only ones of shades and stresses. The foreign minister's approach is known: Israel should lead. As long as the issues are procedural it is most desirable to show flexibility, and David Levi is pushing that line. The prime minister, in his usual way, is not in a hurry. He told Tehiya today that the time has not yet come to make decisions. The talks are still about talks and proposals. On Friday [19 April], he rejected a Baker proposal to formulate a joint document summing up agreed-upon formulae on the convening of a conference. It is possible that Shamir is considering making do at this stage with providing partial answers and requesting additional clarification from the United States, while stressing that Israel is very interested in the continuation of the process although there have so far not been any changes in the positions of the Arab side.

The defense minister is much more reserved. From the start, he viewed the process as a deviation, a pullback from the principles of Israel's peace initiative, in other words, from direct negotiations and elections in the territories. Mr. Arens believes that Israel has switched to a path strewn with obstacles. Among other things, he believes it is more difficult for Israel to demand a veto right over the composition of a Palestinian delegation to negotiations on self-rule. It is more difficult to demand, as was done last year, such a right over a delegation for preparatory talks to work out elections in the territories. The defense minister therefore wants to return the process to a path of elections in Judaea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip. James Baker surely knows about that position and it is possible that was the reason he avoided meeting with Mr. Arens during his previous visit.

The Israeli team will try to formulate a unified position which will be presented to Baker. It will contain a tendency to agree to flexibility on some issues, such as EC participation. The big question, however, is whether Syria will agree to participate in the conference. Will Baker bring the answers from Damascus?

Labor, MAPAM To Attend Conference in Spain

TA2204113691 Tel Aviv DAVAR in Hebrew 22 Apr 91 p 2

[Report by party affairs correspondent Amir Neumann]

[Text] An Israeli delegation will attend a conference scheduled to begin on Thursday [25 April] in Spain, as will delegations from 15 Arab and North African countries, a

Palestinian delegation from the territories, a PLO delegation, and delegations from Mediterranean countries.

The conference, which will be held in Granada under the name: "A Dialogue Between Citizens of the Mediterranean," is sponsored by Spain's ruling Socialist Workers Party's Movement for Peace and Disarmament.

The Israeli delegation will include Labor Party Knesset Members Arye Eli'av and Yosi Beilin, as well as Labor Party members Efrayim Sne and Ya'el Dayan; MAPAM [United Workers Party] members Latif Dori and Monica Pollack; and Dr. Ahmad al-Tibi.

The Palestinian delegation will consist of Faysal al-Husayni, Radwan Abu-'Ayyash, Dr. Zakariyya al-Agha, Dr. Hannan 'Ashrawi, Hanna Sinyurah, Zuhayra Kamal, Ghassan al-Khatib from the Communist Party, and Dr. Riyad al-Maliki from the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. The latter two had refused to participate in U.S. secretary of state's previous meeting with Palestinian representatives.

The PLO delegation to the conference will be headed by 'Arafat's adviser, Nabil Sha'th.

The Israeli-Palestinian issue will be only one of a series of subjects common to the Mediterranean countries to be discussed at the conference.

Jordan Reportedly Tightening Border Security

TA2304083791 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 23 Apr 91 p A1

[Report by 'Oded Zaray]

[Excerpts] Jordan's King Husayn has ordered his Army to take a series of measures along the Jordanian-Israeli border and throughout the Kingdom in a bid to prevent, to the extent possible, attempts to attack Israel from Jordanian soil.

Arab sources in London told HA'ARETZ that the king's orders, which went into effect immediately, came after pro-Israeli elements interceded with the top U.S. Administration officials in a bid to improve Washington-Amman relations, and that those same elements actually arranged the meeting between Husayn and Secretary of State Baker last Saturday [20 April] in al-'Aqabah.

As part of those measures, the Jordanian Army High Command has doubled the number of patrols along the border, particularly in the Jordan Valley area; barricades and check posts have been set up on the roads leading to the vicinity of the border, particularly near places used by infiltrators in the last few weeks to cross the border; and supervision has been increased on people driving through those areas and on laborers coming to work in them.

The Jordanian security authorities have also launched a wide campaign of arrests among radical Islamic movements that incite youngsters to stage jihad-like operations against Israel. According to the Arab sources, 300 members of those movements have been arrested so far, including activists of the Islamic Jihad Movement headed by Shaykh al-Tamimi. [passage omitted]

The Arab sources in London told HA'ARETZ that the Jordanian king intends to turn over a new leaf and that he is now aware of the dangers the Islamic movements pose to his regime. Those movements include the Muslim Brotherhood, which is part of the current government headed by Mudar Badran. The sources went on to say that the Hashemite palace sees the statement issued by the Muslim Brotherhood early yesterday morning, challenging Baker's mission and calling for its failure, as a sort of "declaration of war" on the king, who was at that time hosting Baker in al-'Aqabah.

Islamic Group Members Arrested on Arms Charges

PM2204163191 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 21 Apr 91 p 4

[Unattributed report: "Jordanian Authorities Arrest Youths Following Increase in Infiltration Incidents"]

[Text] Amman, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT Bureau—The Jordanian security authorities have arrested a number of Jordanian citizens on the charge of possession of and training with arms.

The arrests were made in the course of a campaign launched by the authorities about a week ago covering the area of Suwaylih near Amman. The authorities arrested a number of citizens who belong to an unknown Islamic group.

It has been learned that the authorities seized personal weapons, hand grenades, and pistols the group members intended to use against Israeli soldiers in the occupied West Bank.

Two youths belonging to that group had crossed the cease-fire line with the Zionist enemy in the area of Ghawr al-Safi south of the Dead Sea last week. One was killed immediately and the other clashed with members of a Zionist patrol during which two Zionist soldiers were wounded and he was killed, according to the Israeli spokesman at the time.

Such incidents occurred repeatedly over the past few months when youths of religious trends managed to cross the cease-fire line and clash with the Zionist enemy, a matter which exposed Jordan to continuous threats by the Zionist enemy, which blamed the Jordanian authorities for such incidents.

Nigerian Minister Arrives With Message for King

JN2204110191 Amman PETRA-JNA in Arabic 0908 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Text] Amman, 22 Apr (PETRA)—Nigerian Petroleum Resources Minister Jubril Aminu arrived in Amman yesterday evening on a short visit to Jordan. He will deliver a written message to His Majesty King Husayn from Nigerian President Major General Ibrahim Babangida.

King Receives Nigerian Minister

JN2204172291 Amman Domestic Service in English 1600 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Text] His majesty the king received at the Royal Court this afternoon Nigerian Oil Minister Dr. Jubril Aminu who conveyed to his majesty a message from the Nigerian president.

Earlier today, his royal highness the crown prince met with the Nigerian minister. His highness stressed the importance of the relations between Jordan and Nigeria, and explained the problems of the Arab region.

Minister Departs

JN2204190791 Amman Domestic Service in Arabic 1800 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Text] Nigerian Oil Minister Jubril Aminu left Amman this evening following a two-day visit to Jordan during which he conveyed a message to His Majesty King Husayn from Nigerian President Ibrahim Babangida, and met with His Highness Crown Prince Hasan.

The Nigerian minister also held talks with Thabit al-Tahir, minister of energy and mineral resources, that focused on cooperation between the two countries in oil industry.

The Nigerian minister was seen off by the energy and mineral resources minister.

Shipments Arriving From Iraqi Oilfields Daily

JN2304102991 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 23 Apr 91 p 1

[By Musa Hawamidah]

[Text] Samir al-Nabr, director general of the 'Awdah al-Nabr Transport Company, said that Iraq has resumed shipments of crude oil to Jordan after a break during the Gulf war.

Al-Nabr added that 75 oil trucks arrive daily, in contrast to 200 trucks transporting 60,000 barrels of oil per day before the war. This means that one-third of the previous quantity of oil is now being received, al-Nabr noted.

Al-Nabr said that Jordanian trucks arrived at the al-Qa'im oil fields 10 days ago and began to transport oil when supplies from the al-Qa'im refinery became available.

It is recalled that Jordan obtained implicit approval from the UN Security Council's Sanctions Committee to import oil from Iraq since the enforcement of the economic blockade against Iraq.

AL-DUSTUR Editorial Views Baker Visit

JN2104084891 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 21 Apr 91 pp 1, 14

[Editorial: "Committed To Establishing Peace"]

[Text] His Majesty King Husayn's meeting with U.S. Secretary of State James Baker was a significant occasion to clarify Jordan's position on the diplomatic process in the Middle East, led by the United States, for a political settlement of the Arab- Israeli conflict and for a just solution to all aspects of the Palestine question.

His majesty stressed that Jordan is still committed to peace in the region, and that such a commitment, which has remained unchanged and stable over many years, is today firmer and more serious with respect to the materialization of an appropriate historic opportunity to emerge from the dilemma by searching for paths that will lead to an end to the long conflict in this turbulent region of the world.

As Jordan reaffirms its commitment to establishing peace and shows its readiness to proceed on this road, it is very concerned about fully and clearly underscoring the Palestinian factor in this conflict. This cannot be done unless the Palestinians take their issue into their own hands and make an effective contribution to the peace process through representatives they agree upon.

This notwithstanding, Jordan, which insists on a serious and real Palestinian participation in any proposed peace formula, does not object to participating in a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation that would help push peace efforts forward, if the Palestinians wish for and propose such a participation.

Thus, it is clear that the Arab side is no longer responsible for the possible failure of the United States' current efforts, especially since the Palestinians themselves, in their meeting in Jerusalem yesterday, demonstrated enough flexibility to facilitate Baker's task and to help all they could to seize the available opportunity and achieve a just and final peaceful settlement of the Palestine question.

Because we along with the Europeans realize that Israel, with its coercion and settlement policy, is the big obstacle on the road to establishing peace in the region, we cannot but blame the United States itself for what might result from wasting the opportunity at hand for peace in the Middle East.

We will hold the United States, which is preoccupied with the intricacies of the conflict in the region, responsible for wasting the current peace opportunity, because we know that Israel has begun to put up obstacles to peace and to impose its impossible conditions in advance, without facing any indication of American determination to end the policy of heeding, pleasing, and bias. This is an American policy that has resulted in a continuous chain of diplomatic failures in the Middle East.

Jordan stresses its full commitment to establishing just and comprehensive peace in the region; meanwhile, it hopes to see a U.S. position that reflects in practice a commitment to establishing peace in the Middle East. The United States should put sufficient and tangible pressure on the Israeli Government to get it to move away from its intransigence, and to push it along the road to a peace based on justice, right, and international legitimacy.

Editorial Holds U.S. Responsible if Peace Fails

JN2204070191 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 22 Apr 91 pp 1, 16

[Editorial: "The Ball Is in the U.S. Court"]

[Text] After U.S. Secretary of State James Baker stopped off at many stations during his Middle Eastern tour and heard the views and opinions of most sides concerned with establishing peace in the region, it is now clear that the Arabs are moving very seriously toward a peaceful solution. They are motivated by a real desire to end the tragedy that has drowned the peoples of the region in a sea of blood, war, and tension.

In contrast to this movement, which is characterized by flexibility, seriousness, and great devotion to the concept of peace itself, Israel today, more than ever before, seems unwilling to budge from its belligerence and traditional rejection. This is because it lacks the true desire to submit to the principles of international legitimacy and the Security Council and United Nations resolutions, all of which call on it to withdraw from the occupied Arab territories and to recognize the basic legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.

The voices opposing Baker's current initiative coming from a number of pillars in the Israeli Government itself, are incontrovertible evidence that Israel is not willing to move one inch down the path of peace, because of its ulterior motives and repeated affirmations that it will keep the occupied Arab territories. It also declares its rejection of the principle of trading land for peace; in fact, it persists in constructing settlements and bringing more Soviet emigrants into them.

The paradox in the Israeli position today stems from Israel's refusal to accept the idea of the regional conference, which is basically an Israeli idea, adopted later by the United States. This paradox becomes very clear when Israel rejects the participation of European countries and the United Nations in such a proposed conference. It is as though the Western European countries are now on the list of countries hostile to Israel, or are part of an alliance that threatens war against the Hebrew state.

We believe the ball is now in the U.S. court, not the Israeli, especially since this superpower has given, and continues to give Israel all the material and political elements that have enabled Shamir's government to continue turning its back on all international resolutions demanding a peaceful settlement of the Middle East crisis.

Therefore, the responsibility for any possible failure of Baker's mission will fall on the United States in the final analysis before any other party; that is, if Washington once again gives in to Israeli belligerence and demands further concessions from the Arabs under the pretext of convincing the fanatical rightist Israeli Government of the benefits of peace, detested by Shamir and others among the leaders of the ruling coalition in Israel.

Therefore, the process of reaching a peaceful settlement of the long and bitter struggle in the Middle East has become the full responsibility of the United States, in view of the huge changes that have recently taken place in international relations. In addition, the burden of this responsibility is now increasing on the U.S. Administration, because the United States has once again monopolized the peace process in the region. It has placed the United Nations and all other international parties outside the framework of the current diplomatic process.

Brotherhood Newspaper on Refusal To Meet Americans

JN2204115191 Amman AL-RIBAT in Arabic 9 Apr 91 pp 1, 2

[Editorial: "Why the Muslim Brotherhood Refuses To Sit Down With the Americans"]

[Text] Some brothers, who are not lacking in awareness or concern for Islam, have blamed us for the stand taken by the Islamic movement deputies and their refusal to meet with the U.S. delegation that visited Jordan a few days ago under U.S. Congressman Les Aspin, chairman of the Armed Services Committee. Those brothers showed amazement in particular at the harsh letter with which we responded to the U.S. ambassador's mild letter asking us to approve a meeting between the U.S. delegation and some Islamic movement deputies. The dear ones concerned were of the view that we should not close doors even to our enemies and that we should sit down with them, listen to them, and explain to them our view of what happened and what is happening, especially if those involved have influence on Westerners such as representatives and senators. This is because, they argue, we are in dire need of explaining our issues to those people by any means so that the nation's enemies will not have a free arena in which to form public opinion in a way that serves their schemes.

God knows that we are not claiming to be more concerned or farsighted than those brothers who are blaming us. We also realize and understand the stand of brother officials whose posts compel them to talk with those and other people, especially in these difficult days in the life of the nation.

We realize all that. However, and more important, we realize that America is the primary foe of Arabism and Islam. We realize that America is the root of evil and criminality and that it is the mother of satans, and not only the Great Satan, as it is called by some who now appease it at the expense of the nation and its causes. America deployed the world's states, wealth, institutions, armies, and all weapons of destruction against Iraq. It occupied part of Iraq after occupying the place where Islam was revealed. It fomented sedition in Iraq and passed unjust resolutions, especially the recent resolution demanding that Iraq abandon every means of political, military, and economic strength. America has "tailored" the new world order to its liking, just as it "tailored" its treatment of the Palestine question to the desires of the Jews. America has specified to each state its role and position and then dispatched its envoys throughout the world carrying vanity and arrogance and conveying instructions and orders, not for discussion, but to demand their implementation. America is intoxicated with what it has done and feels proud of its supremacy and domination. This America should be told the nation's true feelings toward it and what they think of it.

Briefly, our stand was not an emotional decision or a vent of anger, but a stand that stems from our conviction that the stock of accumulated anger in the hearts of Arabs and Muslims cannot be eased by U.S. schemes, U.S. delegations, or U.S. watchmen. Wounds, blood, and suffering have filled our hearts with tremendous amounts of anger and hatred for America and its agents and allies. Our message and the message of every concerned Arab and sincere Muslim is that that this huge stock should be fed, increased, and directed at removing all traces of America and its crimes and agents. Criminal America and the messengers of its schemes are unwelcome. May God not preserve any of America's agents, hirelings, or watchmen.

Lebanese Forces Propose Delayed Weapons Turnover

NC2304103591 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0815 GMT 23 Apr 91

[Text] An official Lebanese Forces source has stated that the Lebanese Forces support the implementation of the Council of Minister's decision to disband the militias. He said they accept this decision without any amendment or alteration, particularly in connection with the Palestinians' delay in handing over their weapons to legitimate Lebanese authorities. The official reiterated the Lebanese Forces' demand that the weapons be handed over by the militias and the Palestinians simultaneously, in accordance with the Council of Ministers' decision.

The official noted that the Lebanese militias, including the Lebanese Forces, have agreed to take away their members' weapons and voluntarily hand them over to the authorities. He pointed out that following the decision to absorb former militia members into state institutions, the militias have become part of the state and, consequently, it behooves the authorities to take away Palestinian weapons.

The official added: If the state sees that there is an obstacle delaying the Palestinians from handing over their weapons, the Lebanese Forces propose postponing the army's deployment as well as postponing the weapons' turnover by all parties until the problem with the Palestinians is decisively resolved and the Council of Minister's decision can be fully implemented and applied to all parties simultaneously.

The official explained that by making this proposal the Lebanese Forces are seeking to emphasize their determination that the al-Ta'if agreement be implemented. He pointed out that any amendment of the clause providing for the simultaneous handing over of weapons will leave the door open for the amendment of any other clause in the agreement. He said that the state rejected any such amendment when the Lebanese Forces raised the issue of amending the clause pertaining to the appointment of deputies. He stressed the fact that the Council of Ministers' decision is based on the al-Ta'if agreement.

Dib Returns From Syria, Comments on Talks

NC2304082391 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0615 GMT 23 Apr 91

[Excerpt] Minister of State Roger Dib returned to Beirut from Damascus yesterday after meeting with Syrian Chief of Staff General Hikmat al-Shihabi. He reported that progress has been made in the talks and that the Syrians understood his proposals.

Dib telephoned President al-Hirawi and briefed him on the results of his talks in Damascus. Dib will meet with Al-Hirawi in al-Ramla' al-Bayda' today and with the Phalangist Party leader later.

Dib also met with Dr. Samir Ja'ja', commander of the Lebanese Forces, in Ghidras yesterday.

Minister Dib told our radio last night that his visit to the Syrian capital complemented an earlier visit.

He announced: We discussed Lebanese-Syrian ties and current major balances of power. The discussions dealt with the current state of affairs in Lebanon, the future of the relationship between Syria and the Lebanese forces, ways of establishing a new concept of this relationship despite the disagreements of the past, and Lebanon's and Syria's preparedness to adapt to the new regional order in the wake of the Gulf war. [passage omitted]

Israeli 'Strengthened' Presence in Border Zone

NC2304133191 Beirut Domestic Service in Arabic 1130 GMT 23 Apr 91

[Text] The Israeli occupation forces have strengthened their presence inside the occupied border zone. This morning they brought tanks and nine missile batteries, supported by 150 regular soldiers, into the Marj 'Uyun area.

Our correspondent in Tyre reports that the town of Majdal Zun came under violent artillery shelling and heavy machine-gun fire this morning from occupation forces' positions and their agents in Tayr Harfa.

The areas of al-Nabatiyah al-Fawqa and Kafr Tibnin also came under heavy machine-gun fire from the positions of the occupation forces and agents in al-Suhra and al-Dabshah.

Enemy aircraft staged mock raids over al-Nabatiyah last night and dropped scores of flares.

Israeli Gunboat Intercepts Lebanese Vessel

NC2304131491 (Clandestine) Voice of the Mountain in Arabic to Lebanon 1230 GMT 23 Apr 91

[Text] Maritime sources in Sidon have reported that last night an Israeli gunboat intercepted the Lebanese ship (Peace), en route from Sidon to Cyprus and forced it to sail to Haifa port. The sources added that 15 Lebanese and Palestinians were aboard the ship in addition to its Lebanese and Egyptian crew and its Bulgarian captain. No more information is available.

Foreign Minister Welcomes Secretary Baker

JN2204202891 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 2020 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Text] U.S. Secretary of State James Baker arrived in Damascus at 2130 today on a visit to the Syrian Arab Republic. He was received at Damascus International Airport by Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar', the director of protocol at the Foreign Ministry, and the U.S. ambassador in Damascus.

Meets With Al-Asad

JN2304102691 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 1015 GMT 23 Apr 91

[Text] At 1145 today, His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad received U.S. Secretary of State James Baker. The meeting was attended by Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' and U.S. Ambassador in Damascus Edward Djerejian.

Commentary Urges 'Removal' of Saddam Government

JN2004082991 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 1130 GMT 16 Apr 91

[Station commentary]

[Text] Arabs and Muslims are celebrating 'Id al-Fitr. This year's celebration lost much of its beauty and splendor, however, because of the tragedies and wounds that afflicted Iraq and the Arab countries. These wounds are still bleeding, and only time can heal them.

The displaced Iraqis who fled the regime's oppression exceeded the one million mark. Most of them climbed rugged mountains and crossed difficult terrain with the aim of reaching a safe haven in Iran or in Turkey. Hundreds of thousands of innocent Iraqis are besieged by cold weather and hunger. Their only fault is that they demanded the removal of the man who was responsible for the destructive and horrible disasters which afflicted Iraq, its people, and its establishments.

The man responsible for the disaster is clinging to the seat of power at the cost of sacrificing an entire population. He has aimed his guns at the hearts of his own citizens, forgetting all the false slogans he raised to cover his crime of occupying Kuwait, striking at Arab solidarity, and involving Iraq in a confrontation against the international community, whose results were known by those near and far before it even began.

The Arabs are pained by the destruction and ruin that hit Iraq. They are pained in Syria, as well as in Egypt and the Gulf states. The pain grows with the continuation of the Iraqi rulers' practices, which constitute a mark of shame on the forehead of the nation and humanity. International condemnation is rife, and photographs and news reports of the expanding tragedy in northern and southern Iraq have obscured the tragedy of the Palestinian people and the Zionists' repressive and racist measures.

The enemy prime minister, who is good at exploiting opportunities, answers those critical of his policy of deportation and expulsion, which he practices against the Palestinian strugglers, by asking them to devote their attention and turn their eyes to what Saddam Husayn is doing to the Iraqi people.

We in Syria, and all the Arabs who confronted the Baghdad ruler's crime in Kuwait and warned against its tragic consequences earnestly hope that everyone will rush to assist the Iraqi people and treat their wounds. The Baghdad regime is an obstacle, and there is no way of dealing with a condemned regime that dealt the greatest harm to the region, the nation, and the Iraqi people, and whose continued power constitutes a threat to Iraq and the other Arab countries.

It is now clear to everyone that fraternal Iraq will not be able to take its place in the international community under the shadow of the condemned regime, whose crimes surpassed all limits. Iraq will not be able to regain its well-known Arab role under this regime, which dealt the greatest harm to inter-Arab relations. Indeed, Iraq cannot maintain its internal unity in the eyes of the world with the continuation of this regime, which has become a source of general abhorrence to all the sectors of the people.

The removal of this regime is the best guarantee of Iraq's unity. All strata of the Iraqi people have realized this essential fact as witnessed by the popular uprising, which spread all over the country from the south, to the middle, and to the north, and as evidenced by the consensus of the Iraqi opposition on the need to topple the regime and establish a patriotic government to safeguard the country's unity and employ its resources for Arab integration and development and for the battles of defending pan-Arab existence.

The Iraqi people, who enjoy the support of the Arab masses, will realize their aims sooner or later. This is history's ruling.

Syrian Envoy Hails U.S. Peace Proposals

PM2304111691 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 20 Apr 91 p 2

[Ahmad Kamal Hamdi report: "Syrian Ambassador in Bonn Tells AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT: There Are Positive Elements in Baker's Proposals"]

[Excerpt] Bonn, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT—On the occasion of the Syrian Arab Republic's National Day—Evacuation Day, 17 April—AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT interviewed Syrian Ambassador in Bonn Sulayman Haddad about current events on the Arab scene, the peace conference to be held to resolve the Arab-Israel conflict, and Syrian-German relations.

In his interview, the ambassador cited the tour of the Middle East region which U.S. Secretary of State James Baker intends to make and the results of his recent visit to Syria. He said that there is now a suitable opportunity to push the peace process forward and that Syria believes

that this opportunity must not be wasted. This, because there are some positive elements in the U.S. proposals that Baker brought with him, in addition to other elements "on which we are not agreed with the U.S. side. They need close examination and adequate study." Syria hopes to reach a positive result in that regard. This, because it is serious about discussing all the proposals and ideas submitted by Baker and does not conceal its sincere desire to work for peace. This was clear during Baker's visit to Damascus, where he had a long meeting with Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad. Undoubtedly there are some points which require further discussion. This is why the parties concerned should meet to study these points and work to discuss them and arrive at a unified decision.

With regard to Syria's position on the peace conference, Ambassador Sulayman Haddad pointed out that Syria is for convening an international peace conference based on the UN resolutions, especially Resolutions 242 and 338, and under UN auspices, not based on isolated or side contacts that cannot be helpful or fruitful or that would be used as a cover or a start for bilateral meetings.

The ambassador added that Syria is determined to find a just and lasting solution to the Palestinian issue. The Syrian ambassador in Bonn spoke about the tragedy currently taking place in northern Iraq, saying that Syria condemns the perpetration of mass murders and eviction against Iraqi citizens, and that it is against partitioning and dividing Iraq into conflicting minorities. It also rejects what the Iraqi Government is doing against Iraqi citizens in the north and the south. [passage omitted]

Syrian Forces Role in Gulf War Praised

JN2004080891 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 0415 GMT 19 Apr 91

[Text] Kuwait—Staff Lieutenant General Prince Khalid Bin-Sultan Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, commander of the joint forces in the Gulf, has praised the role of the Syrian Arab forces in the Kuwait liberation war and President Hafiz al-Asad's wise leadership. In a speech while inspecting the site of the Syrian Arab forces in Kuwait yesterday, Prince Khalid expressed high appreciation and immense gratitude for the Syrian Arab people and their leader, President Hafiz al-Asad.

Addressing the Syrian troops, the prince said: Today we celebrate many important occasions in our life. They are the 'Id- al-Fitr, the restoration of the smile to the faces of the Kuwaiti people, and the evacuation day in Syria. In the name of the custodian of the two holy mosques, I congratulate you on all of these occasions.

Lt. Gen. Khalid noted that the presence at this ceremony of the forces of the Syrian division, the commander of the Egyptian forces, and officers from the Gulf Cooperation Council states heralds the beginning of an Arab unity that is genuine and not mere words. He said: We have participated in the liberation, and in restoring the smile to the sisterly state of Kuwait under the leadership and supervision of our leaders, and this is a cause of pride for our peoples.

Lt. Gen. Khalid Bin-Sultan told the SANA correspondent in Kuwait that the Syrian Arab people under the leadership of President Hafiz al-Asad are an Arab symbol. He said the Arab nation is proud to have the Syrian Arab forces on Kuwaiti soil in the service of the Arab homeland and the Islamic world. He praised the high standards of efficiency of the Syrian Arab forces and described his visit to the Syrian forces in Kuwait as a visit to his brothers.

More on Al-Asad's Meeting With Al-Baz

JN2204185891 Damascus Syrian Arab Television Network in Arabic 1730 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Excerpts] President Hafiz al-Asad received at 1100 today Dr. Usamah al-Baz, director of the Egyptian president's office for political affairs. [passage omitted]

Dr. al-Baz conveyed a message to his excellency the president from Egyptian President Muhammad Husni Mubark. The talk focused on the current activities in the region within the framework of peace efforts.

Kazakh Minister, Delegation Arrive in Damascus

JN2204163391 Damascus SANA in Arabic 1540 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Text] Damascus, 22 Apr (SANA)—Minister of Internal Affairs of the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic Trinin Vich Mikhail Biriznok [name as received] arrived in Damascus at noon today at the head of a delegation on a visit to Syria that will last for several days.

He was welcomed at Damascus International Airport by Assistant Minister of Interior Major General Salah-al-Din Dabbagh, senior Interior Ministry officers and high-ranking employees, and the Soviet Embassy ambassador and staff in Damascus.

Afghanistan

Rebels Destroy Post in Attack on Bagram Base

BK1904154691 Islamabad Domestic Service in Urdu 1500 GMT 19 Apr 91

[Text] Reports say the mujahidin in Afghanistan have destroyed a security post of the Kabul regime during an attack on the biggest air base in Bagram. Eight Kabul soldiers were killed and 15 captured in the attack. The mujahidin attacked the Khad office in the northern province of Baghlan, killing two Kabul soldiers and two Khad agents. A number of soldiers fled, leaving behind 10 Kalashnikov rifles, a rocket launcher, and a machine gun. Another report says the mujahidin freed three posts of the Kabul forces in (Jawalway) area and seized a large quantity of arms and ammunition.

Destroy More Posts; Khowst Hit

BK2004115291 Islamabad Domestic Service in English 1100 GMT 20 Apr 91

[Text] In Afghanistan, the mujahidin are reported to have destroyed two more security posts and captured a large quantity of arms and ammunition in recent operations in Herat, Helmand and Ghowr Provinces. Fifty Kabul regime troops also surrendered to mujahidin.

Another report says the Kabul regime Air Force bombed the liberated town of Khowst even on 'Id day and continued for the next two days dropping more than 50 bombs in three days. The Kabul Air Force, however, could not hit any target and all the bombs fell near the old and new airports outside (Takhta Beg) Garrison and civil locality of (Moatem). Two bombs hit a bazaar where several shops were destroyed, but there were no casualties.

Rebels Claim 30 Villages Taken

BK2104002891 Hong Kong AFP in English 1710 GMT 20 Apr 91

[Text] Islamabad, April 20 (AFP)—The Afghan resistance said Saturday that 30 villages bordering the Soviet Union fell to the mujahedeen in another success after the capture of the strategic eastern city of Khowst three weeks ago.

The guerrillas overran some 60 security posts in the Sare-pul area after a surprise attack during the Moslem festival of 'Id al Fitr Thursday, sources said.

Some 70 regime soldiers were killed and wounded in the night long fighting, the sources said, adding that at least 120 soldiers and militia men were taken prisoner.

The 30 villages "liberated" included Khar Zar, Qadam and Neemdan located close to the Soviet Union, the sources said.

Some 40 regime soldiers surrendered, while the guerrillas seized 120 light and heavy weapons including one tank, an armoured personnel carrier and several military trucks and food stocks, they said.

The capture of a large area in the north is the resistance guerrillas' second important achievement along the country's border with the soviet union within the past 10 days.

A week after their March 31 victory at Khowst the mujahedeen captured Dashte archi in Konduz Province which is also located close to the Soviet Union.

The fall of Khowst has made the eastern Paktia Province's capital Gardeyz vulnerable.

Both the official Afghan media and resistance sources said the mujahedeen gunners rocketed Gardeyz on 'Id day causing damage to property.

No casualty figures were available but the resistance sources said that some families fled to nearby Zurmat District while desertions were also reported among the regime troops based in Gardeyz.

70 Kabul Troops Reportedly Defect to Rebels

BK2104153591 Islamabad Domestic Service in Urdu 1500 GMT 21 Apr 91

[Text] Reports from Afghanistan say the mujahidin have intensified their pressure on Gardeyz, the headquarter of Paktia Province. They are reportedly attacking the town from the southern and eastern sides and have so far killed or wounded 50 Kabul regime troops. Seventy Kabul regime troops, along with their arms and ammunition, have defected to the mujahidin.

Scud Hits Rebel-Held Area in East, Killing 60

BK2104073291 Hong Kong AFP in English 0720 GMT 21 Apr 91

[Text] Islamabad, April 21 (AFP)—At least 60 people were killed and scores injured when the Kabul regime fired a Scud missile at rebel-held eastern Afghanistan, resistance sources said Sunday.

Dozens of shops and private buildings were destroyed as the long-range ground-to-ground missile slammed in to the main bazaar of Asadabad, capital of Konarha Province, the sources said.

The missile landed at about 4.00 p.m. (1100 GMT) Saturday when the bazaar was crowded with travellers and shoppers, the sources said.

The attack was the first major incident reported in Konarha Province which was fully "liberated" in 1988.

Since then it has been administered by the Afghan resistance, fighting to overthrow the Soviet-backed regime of President Najibullah.

Konarha, the power base of the Saudi Arabian-backed Salfi sect of Wahabi Moslems, is used as a transit point for Afghans travelling between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

The sources said the attack appeared "deliberate," following reports that mujahidin guerrillas in Konarha were preparing for a major offensive against the nearby city of Jalalabad.

Mujahidin Say 300 Killed

BK2104132991 Hong Kong AFP in English 1256 GMT 21 Apr 91

[Text] Peshawar, Pakistan, April 21 (AFP)—More than 300 people were killed and 700 injured Saturday in a Scud missile attack by Kabul Government troops on an eastern Afghan city held by rebels, witnesses and mujahidin sources said Sunday.

More than 150 shops, including some weapons and ammunition outlets, were gutted as at least three ground-to-ground missiles hit the main market in Asadabad, capital city of Kunar province, which has been controlled by the guerrillas since 1988.

Resistance sources said dozens of houses were destroyed in the worst Scud attack in the 12 year history of the resistance movement.

The mujahidin government-in-exile here denounced the Scud attack as a "hateful crime" perpetrated by what it described as the Soviet puppet Kabul government.

President Najibullah has "added a new sombre page to his heinous and unpardonable crimes against the Afghan nation," the mujahidin news agency MIDIA quoted the government in exile as saying.

Seventy bodies were pulled from the wreckage of buildings and at least 60 wounded were taken across the border to Pakistan, MIDIA said, adding there were no resistance leaders among the dead.

Some sources here said three scud missiles fell on the city, which is a traditional passageway to Afghanistan.

Saturday's missile attack was the second in three days near the Pakistan border. On Wednesday a missile fired by government troops fell on Landi Kotal, on the Pakistani side of the frontier, killing one resident.

The attacks come three weeks after the government's defeat at Khowst, an eastern garrison town captured by the mujahidin on March 31.

Kunar is the power base of the Saudi-backed Salfi sect of Wahabi Moslems and the fundamentalist Hezb-e-Eslami faction.

The mujahidin had planned to follow up their Khowst victory with more operations against several Afghan cities in the coming weeks, including a rocket attack against Gardeyz, not far from Khowst.

Kabul has evacuated several families of government soldiers from Gardeyz.

Hundreds Reported Killed in Clashes

LD2204132791 Kabul BAKHTAR in Dari 1130 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Text] Kabul 22 Apr (BAKHTAR)—Three hundred men from Mawalawi Kamilulrahman Wahhibi [name as received] and a number of residents of Asadabad city, Konar Province were killed when the Gulbuddin extremist forces fired heavy weapons and missiles on the center and ammunition and fuel depots of the Wahhabis.

BAKHTAR's military section reports that continuing their revengeful attack and clashes, on 20 April the groups attached to the Gulbuddin extremist groups attacked with missiles and heavy weapons a big headquarters in which hundreds of Wahhabi men were living. Several arms and ammunition depots and a huge fuel storage in the area were also attacked. As a result, a huge fire occurred in the center of the arms and ammunition depots and the fuel storage. During the resulting explosion and fire, which lasted for many hours, more than 300 persons were killed and more than 500 persons from the wahhibis and residents of Asadabad were injured. Also, all of the shops of Asadabad city and houses which were close to the city were completely destroyed and razed as a result of the ammunition explosion and fire.

This is the first time since the beginning of clashes between the Gulbuddin and Wahhabi groups that such heavy casualties and financial damage has been inflicted on any of the warring groups in a single attack despite the fact hundreds of people have been killed or injured in these clashes.

Rebel Losses Said in 'Millions'

BK2204141191 Hong Kong AFP in English 1351 GMT 22 Apr 91

[By Mohsen Reza]

[Text] Asadabad, Afghanistan, April 22 (AFP)—Broken bodies and torn limbs littered the streets of this burning city Monday following Kabul's worst attack on rebel forces in 12 years of civil war.

Kabul, which hit the town centre with at least three Scud surface-to-surface missiles over the weekend, killed or injured about 1,000 people and destroyed millions of dollars worth of mujahidin weapons and ammunition.

Mujahidin sources here called [the] attack a major setback to its offensives against Kabul forces in several Afghan cities. Afghan observers in Pakistan said the unprecedented devastation was revenge for Kabul's loss of the strategic garrison city of Khowst, which fell to the resistance last month.

The sickening smell of burning human flesh permeated the main bazaar, as some shops were still burning 48 hours after the attack Saturday afternoon.

Human limbs were scattered some 500 to 600 meters (yards) away from the market centre. Victims' personal belongings—including shoes, diaries and items of clothing—were strewn about the streets.

Relief workers have retrieved more than 100 bodies. Many were charred and could not be identified. Resistance sources said 300 people were killed and 700 wounded.

Hundreds of Afghan refugee families have thronged the city in search of their relatives as volunteers, including members of the Saudi Red Crescent Society, were arranging funerals.

Asadabad, a popular transit point between Afghanistan and bordering Pakistan, is a hilly town of about 10,000 people straddling the river Kunar.

Its bazaar was closed as the city mourned.

Local police officer Fazal Mohammed said the missile hit like an enormous clap of thunder, causing residents to panic and run through the streets.

Arms dealer Abdul Ghafoor, 25, said he was knocked unconscious.

"When I recovered I saw dead and injured lying everywhere. People were crying for help but there was no arrangement for emergency assistance," he said. "The bazaar was full of smoke. It was a horrible scene."

About 70 arms shops were set ablaze as petrol and diesel barrels stored in the bazaar caught fire and spread to a large area, witnesses said.

"I had everything except Stinger missiles—from Egyptian Sakr rockets to Soviet Kalashnikov rifles—in my shop," said Mian Rasool, owner of the city's largest weapons store which was reduced to rubble with a direct hit.

Mr. Rasool, busily collecting twisted assault rifles and pieces of guns from the smouldering wreckage, said he was out for prayers when the attack took place.

His inventory was worth more than one million dollars, and he lost another million in Pakistani and Afghani currency that was stored in the three-storey shop, he said.

Four multi-storey hotels full of Afghani and Pakistani travellers making the popular border crossing were destroyed.

"Our hotel was crowded with travellers.... The three-storey building collapsed, burying all alive, including eight women," said hotel attendant Toor Khan, who had left the building on an errand.

Several mud structures, including a religious school run by the pro-Saudi fundamentalist commander Maulvi Jamilur Rehman, also caved in.

Mr. Rehman has headed an Islamic government here since mujahidin forces captured the entire Kunar Province more than two years ago. His party workers engaged in rescue operations were convinced that some 300 people were buried.

"We were in the school when the big bang hit the area," said Abu Asad, a Sudanese student in Mr. Rehman's Islamic school, which also teaches a number of Saudi, Malaysian and Bahraini students.

"We jumped out of the windows not knowing what had happened," he said.

Mr. Rehman's government had arranged to restore electricity in the province destroyed in the fighting two years ago. But the attack had destroyed the newly installed poles and pylons, and their target of supplying power from Monday has been delayed indefinitely, resistance sources said.

Rebels Blame Soviets for Attack

BK2204123591 Hong Kong AFP in English 0915 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Text] Peshawar, Pakistan, April 22 (AFP)—Afghan mujahidin fighters Monday blamed Moscow for the Kabul regime's weekend Scud missile attack on eastern Afghanistan in which hundreds of people were killed and wounded.

Najibullah Lafraie, information minister in the mujahidin government-in-exile in Pakistan, said, "it was a senseless massacre for which Moscow is responsible."

"The Soviet Union has provided this weapon to its puppet regime in Kabul, and its advisors are still directing the Afghan forces," Mr. Lafraie said, adding, "Moscow cannot acquit itself from this crime."

At least three Scuds fell Saturday on Asadabad, capital of the border province of Kunar, which the mujahidin seized in 1988 when the Soviet Union ended its nine-year military occupation of Afghanistan.

The missiles targeted the crowded market and populous part of the city, a transit point for travellers to and from Afghanistan.

At least half of the bazaar was razed, and dozens of houses were destroyed, while many shops selling arms and ammunition were gutted.

Resistance sources said rescue work was continuing Monday. Secondary explosions rocked the city as ordnance rained down on adjoining areas until Sunday.

The exact death toll was still unknown, but several resistance sources claimed 300 people died and up to 700 were wounded, while some sources say as many as six Scuds could have been fired.

Mr. Lafraie said the attack showed Afghan President Najibullah's "frustration over the humiliation" his forces suffered three weeks ago in Khowst, also near the border with Pakistan.

Afghan observers said the unprecedented devastation caused by the attack in the resistance's 12-year struggle to overthrow the Kabul government appeared a premeditated move to avenge the defeat in Khowst, which was a regime stronghold.

The guerrillas say they are planning to use the heavy weaponry they captured from Khowst in other operations over the next few weeks.

Observers said the surprise Scud attack on Kunar was a double-edged sword, both causing casualties and serving as a warning to the resistance that future operations would invite retaliation.

However, Nawab Salim, spokesman of the fundamentalist Hezb-i-Eslami faction headed by Gulbuddin Hikmatyar, said, "our people are determined to take revenge," adding that the regime's terror tactics always backfired.

"It seems the Kabul rulers were sending signals that if the mujahidin renew their activity, the retaliation will be severe," he said.

But he said, already "the attack has sent shock waves among the refugees and people are asking for weapons to fight."

Mujahidin commander Amin Wardak said the Khowst victory had unnerved the regime. "They are very nervous as they know that we are planning more operations in Gardeyz, Ghazni, Jalalabad, Lowgar, the southwest and the north," he said.

He said Asadabad was being used as a launching pad for attacks on the eastern city of Jalalabad, as reported by some sources.

He denounced the attack as "purely destructive." The government wanted to disrupt "the social structure" the mujahidin had established in the "liberated areas," he said.

Mujahidin Said 'Preparing To Attack Qandahar'

BK2304092891 Islamabad THE PAKISTAN TIMES in English 23 Apr 91 p 9

[Text] Pishin, April 22—Afghan Mujahidin are preparing to attack Qandahar the second largest city of Afghanistan.

The commander of Spin Buldak area, Wakil Abdul Samad Khan, said that the suburbs of the city, were in complete control of the Mujahidin and the authority of Afghan Interim Government had been established in that area.

He claimed the Kabul regime troops in some parts of Qandahar area had sent secret signals to the Mujahidin and assured of their loyalties in the wake of the proposed attack.

Islamabad Reports Mujahidin Broadcasts From Khowst

BK1904034891 Islamabad Domestic Service in Urdu 0200 GMT 19 Apr 91

[Text] In Afghanistan, the mujahidin have started experimental broadcasts from Khowst radio station after carrying out necessary repairs. They have named the station: Radio Voice of Afghanistan, Khowst. According to reports, the messages of the prisoners of war captured from the Khowst front are being broadcast by the station an hour a day.

Minister Wakil Leaves for Moscow, New York

LD2204162391 Kabul Domestic Service in Pashto 1530 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Text] Abdul Wakil, foreign affairs minister of the Republic of Afghanistan, left today for Moscow and New York for a working visit. He will meet His Excellency Javier Perez de Cuellar, UN secretary general, as well as the relevant authorities of the Soviet Union.

Bangladesh

Jatiya Party Acting Chairman Arrested 21 Apr

BK2104131891 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh External Service in English 1230 GMT 21 Apr 91

[Text] Acting Chairman of the Jatiya Party Muzamur Rahman Chowdhury [former prime minister] was arrested from his Gulshan residence in Dhaka in the early hours of Sunday [21 April].

Jatiya Party Leader Leads Parliamentary Walkout

BK2104142091 Hong Kong AFP in English 1242 GMT 21 Apr 91

[Text] Dhaka, April 21 (AFP)—Moudud Ahmed, Bangladesh's vice president under deposed president Hussain Mohammad Ershad, joined parliamentary proceedings Sunday and led a walkout, just nine days after being freed from jail.

Mr. Ahmed was elected in the February general elections on a Jatiya Party ticket but could not attend the opening session as he was detained under the Special Powers Act of 1974 in the high-security Dhaka Central Jail.

He was released on bail on April 11, six days after the parliament session began.

Laughter erupted when Mr. Ahmed demanded the repeal of the Special Powers Act, which was used indiscriminately against opponents of Mr. Ershad's government during its eight-year rule.

The Jatiya Party MPs then staged a walkout.

Parliament resumed Sunday after a nine-day recess for the Bengali new year and the Moslem 'Id festival.

The session, expected to last just one week, could see a stormy debate over the change of the form of government from the current presidential system to a parliamentary form.

The ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party of Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia wants to retain the current form, but give parliament greater powers, sources said.

If the presidential form is retained then Begum Zia would announce the date for presidential elections before the session is suspended, sources said.

Dhaka Reports Secretary Level Reshuffle

BK2304100591 Dhaka Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT 23 Apr 91

[Text] Thirteen officials of secretary and additional secretary levels have been transferred. Mr. Khurshid Alam, principal finance secretary, has been transferred as the principal secretary, the President's Secretariat. Mir Mustafizur Rahman, alternative director of the World Bank, has been appointed secretary, Finance Division, Ministry of Finance. Mr. Anisur Rahman, secretary, science and technology, has been transferred as secretary, defense. Mr. A.Z.A. Nasiruddin, secretary, information, has been transferred as secretary, fisheries and livestock. Kazi Manzur A. Maula, secretary, social welfare, has been transferred as secretary, information. Mr. (Lutfahail) Majid, secretary, fisheries and livestock, has been transferred as home secretary. Mr. Mohammad Ali, secretary, civil aviation, has been transferred as secretary, land. Mr. Sayeed Ahmed, secretary, land, has been transferred as secretary, Planning Division. Mr. Abul Hashem, secretary, cultural affairs, has been transferred as secretary, science and technology. Mr. (?Rafat) Ali, additional secretary, President's Secretariat, has been transferred as additional secretary in charge of the Ministry of Civil Aviation. Mr. Mohammad Abdur Rashid, additional secretary, Finance Division, has been transferred as additional secretary in charge of the Ministry of Forest and Environment. Mr. Mohammad Faizullah, additional secretary, industry, has been transferred as additional secretary in charge of the Ministry of Social Welfare, and Mr. I.U. Malik, additional secretary, energy and mineral resources has been transferred as additional secretary in charge of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs.

Parties Condemn Shootings on Indian Border

BK2104134491 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh External Service in English 1230 GMT 21 Apr 91

[Text] Bangladesh Nationalist Party has condemned and protested the firing by the Indian Border Security Force [BSF] along the Kushtia border on Friday last [19 April]. In a statement in Dhaka Saturday, it urged India to refrain from resorting to such excessive and provocative act for the sake of good neighborliness. The secretary general of the party, Abdus Salam Taluqdar, said the BSF opened fire without any provocation after entering Bangladesh territory in the Kazirpur village in Meharpur District. He said earlier on the 14th of this month a group of Indian citizens under the protection of the BSF entered the same place and damaged tube wells and the paddy fields. Mr. Taluqdar demanded compensation from India for the damage done to Bangladesh (?lives) and property and regret by India for the incident.

The leader of the opposition in Parliament, Sheikh Hasina, in a statement has expressed her great concern at the killing of BDR [Bangladesh Rifles] jawans [soldiers] and Bangladesh civilians. She urged the government to initiate diplomatic acts to stop recurrence of untoward incident along the Bangladesh-India border and to save life and property of Bangladesh citizens.

Secretary General of the Jamaat-i-Islami Maulana Matiur Rahman Nizami in his statement also expressed serious concern at the firing incident by Indian Border Security Force.

Meanwhile, a press release by the Bangladesh Rifles issued in Dhaka says the incident of firing and infiltration by BSF and Indian citizens is not the first time. Such incidents occurred a number of times in the recent past. The press release said such recurring incidents should be stopped in future.

India

Reportage on Situation in Punjab, Assam, Kashmir

Shekhar on Election Postponement

BK2004080091 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0730 GMT 20 Apr 91

[Text] The prime minister, Mr. Chandra Shekhar, has said that elections in Punjab and Assam cannot be postponed indefinitely unless the situation becomes totally untenable. Speaking to newsmen informally after the defense investiture ceremony at the Rashtrapati Bhavan [President's House] in New Delhi today, he however said that he does not expect such an eventuality. He said the government has suggested to the election commission to hold elections in Punjab before the 20th and in Assam before the seventh of June. He clarified that it is for the election commission to decide the dates.

Denies Secret Talks With Militants

BK2004162391 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT 20 Apr 91

[Text] The prime minister has said that elections in Punjab and Assam are to be completed by the middle of June. Addressing a press conference in Bhubaneswar this evening, Mr. Chandra Shekhar said the Election Commission is only to decide the suitability of poll dates taking into account the prevailing situation in these states. He said elections in Jammu and Kashmir cannot be held along with the rest of the country before completing delimitation of constituencies in the state.

The prime minister denied that he had any secret talks with militants of Punjab as reported in a section of the press. But anybody willing to have discussions to bring about an improvement in the situation in the state is most welcome, he added.

Reacting to the demands voiced by many leaders for more fiscal autonomy to the states, the prime minister said he is in favor of granting financial autonomy to the states. However, he clarified that there is a need to strike a balance while sharing powers between the states and the union government.

Violent Incidents Summarized

BK2104161691 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT 21 Apr 91

[Text] In Kashmir Valley, 13 persons, including eight terrorists, were killed in cross-firing in separate incidents today. According to official sources, five persons, including a terrorist, were killed in exchange of fire between security forces and terrorists at Safaqadal and Ali Masjid Chowk. In Baramulla District, a so-called area commander of a banned militant organization and six of his associates were killed in cross firing when terrorists fired on a search party. Meanwhile, security forces have arrested 13 subversives from different parts of the valley.

In Punjab, five militants were among 14 persons killed in separate incidents since last evening. According to an official spokesman, one militant was killed and a CRPF [Central Reserve Police Force] deputy superintendent of police was injured in an encounter near village Churchak in Faridkot District last night. In separate cases of intergang rivalry, two militants were killed in Gurdaspur District and one each in Patiala and Amritsar District. Elsewhere in the state unidentified gunmen shot dead nine persons at different places in the state.

Foreigners Asked To Leave Kashmir

BK2204112691 Hong Kong AFP in English 1032 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Text] Jammu, India, April 22 (AFP)—Indian intelligence agencies have asked foreigners to leave Kashmir, citing security fears in the strife-torn northern state, where Moslem militants kidnapped two Swedish nationals last month.

The federal agencies asked the foreigners, mostly tourists, to leave following Indian forces' failure to trace the two Swedish engineers, who were abducted in the valley by armed militants March 31, officials said.

"Tourists have started leaving Kashmir," a state tourism department official said by telephone from Srinagar, the urban hub of the violent Moslem secessionist campaign, adding that 170 of an estimated 1,000 tourists had left the region since Saturday.

Officials said the security advisory was issued Saturday [20 April] to European visitors and foreign skiers in Kashmir.

The tourism official said others who had made reservations ahead of their visit to Kashmir had begun cancelling bookings because of the abductions.

Thirty Swedish colleagues of the abducted men, Johan Jansson and Olle Loman, had also quit their posts at an Indo-Swedish hydroelectric project in Uri district Sunday [21 April] and flown to New Delhi, Kashmir government officials said.

The decision to withdraw the remaining Swedish technicians and their families was taken by Stockholm because of the abductions, they said, adding that it followed a recent visit to the project site by Swedish officials.

The official team visited uri after the Jansson-Loman kidnapping and observed that the "environment in the valley was far from satisfactory" and recommended a temporary halt in the project.

Kashmir officials said 4,000 Kashmiris would lose their jobs if Sweden pulled out of the four billion dollar joint venture.

Security officers were still engaged in an operation to trace the two Swedes, but so far no clues to their whereabouts have surfaced, officials said in Jammu, the turbulent state's relatively peaceful winter capital.

The Swedes' Moslem abductors issued an assurance Monday that they would not harm their hostages for "another week," but did not specify any date.

The kidnappers, a militant group identifying itself as the Moslem Janbaz Force (MJF), have extended a deadline for the execution of the two Swedes several times since the snatching 23 days ago.

They are demanding that India allow investigators from the London-based human rights group Amnesty International and United Nations observers to visit Kashmir if the two men are to be spared.

The two Swedes are the first foreigners to be held hostage by Moslem militants, who frequently kidnap Indians to secure the release of jailed associates.

New Delhi has rejected the MJF's demand, while the double kidnap has been condemned both by Amensty International and the United Nations.

Violence linked to the Moslem secessionist campaign has left more than 2,200 people dead in Kashmir, India's only Moslem-majority state and the source of two wars between India and Pakistan, since gaining momentum in January 1990.

Government Admits To Talks With Sikhs

BK2204165591 Hong Kong AFP in English 1338 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Text] New Delhi, April 22 (AFP)—The Indian Government revealed Monday that it was holding secret talks with Sikh separatists, as ongoing violence for a Sikh homeland left 17 people dead.

An official spokesman said here that two groups of Sikh militants campaigning for an independent homeland called Khalistan (Land of the Pure) met Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar on April 17 and 19.

He declined to identify the groups or give further details.

It is the first time an Indian prime minister has met representatives of Sikh separatists, who launched their struggle for a theocratic homeland in the northern state of Punjab in mid-1983.

The PRESS TRUST OF INDIA (PTI) quoted "well-informed sources" as saying that "more Punjab militants favour a dialogue with the government and are likely to meet Mr. Shekhar shortly."

In the latest reported bloodshed, PTI said that seven Sikh militants were among 17 people killed overnight Saturday.

Security forces gunned down five of the guerrillas in four separate gunbattles, while two other militants were reportedly killed in internecine war elsewhere, PTI said.

The others were civilian victims of Sikh separatists, police added.

The two groups which met Mr. Shekhar have reportedly agreed to participate in the forthcoming elections to federal parliament and to the state legislature in Punjab, PTI said.

The All-India Sikh Students Federation (AISSF) of Manjit Singh and the Sikh Akali Dal Party headed by ex-police officer Simranjit Singh Mann, which support the separatist campaign, have said they will take part in the elections.

The AISSF is also known to enjoy the backing of the shadowy panthic committee, a separatist group led by Gurbachal Singh Manochahal and four major Sikh separatist groups.

"According to the sources, the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) of Pakistan, which runs the major Pakistan-based militant groups, is unhappy over the prospects of elections" in the border state of Punjab, PTI said.

India charges Pakistan, with which it has fought three wars, with arming and harbouring Sikh separatists. Islamabad has denied the allegation.

PTI added that after meeting Mr. Shekhar, the Sikh militants had also held "extensive" discussions with Punjab Governor Om Prakash Malhotra, a former army chief who took over in December.

Punjab, where more than 1,300 people have died in the Khalistan campaign so far this year, is to elect 13 MP's to the federal parliament and—for the first since May 1987—choose its own legislature.

The government had originally said that elections in Punjab would be held along with the all-India polls next month, but the election commission ordered a postponment due to security considerations.

No fresh dates have been announced, but Mr. Shekhar said Monday that the elections in the Sikh-majority state were aimed at bringing the militants "back to the national mainstream."

Mr. Shekhar, speaking to reporters after filing his nomination papers in the northern town of Ballia, in Uttar Pradesh state, also lashed out against political parties opposing the Punjab poll on the plea that its outcome would be dictated by the rebels.

But he said nothing about his talks with the Sikh guerrillas.

Former Premier Rajiv Gandhi's Congress (I) party and the powerful Communist Party of India (Marxist) have announced a boycott of the Punjab hustings and at least two other national parties are expected to follow suit.

On Monday, CPI (M) leader Harkishan Singh Surjeet, a Sikh, flayed Mr. Shekhar for ordering elections in Punjab, saying his insistence on polls in the state "is an attempt to hand over power to the extremists."

Mr. Surjeet challenged Mr. Shekhar's claim that the situation in Punjab had improved.

"The extremists are able to impose upon the people any code (of conduct) they want," he said. "Killings have more than doubled (since Mr. Shekhar became premier in November). Is this peace?"

The veteran communist warned that Sikh rebels would interpret a possible victory in Punjab as a plebiscite on Khalistan and thereby internationalise the issue, "making it worse than Kashmir," the Moslem majority state disputed by Pakistan and also the scene of a secessionist struggle.

Punjab Groups To Meet Shekhar 'Soon'

BK2204170891 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Text] AIR [All India Radio] correspondents quoting informed sources say more groups of Punjab militants are coming forward for talks with the center. Their representatives are likely to meet the prime minister, Mr. Chandra Shekhar, soon. At least three factions of militants met the prime minister in the capital twice last week, and later discussions with the Punjab governor [as heard]. These groups are understood to be willing to participate in the election process.

Parties Want Briefing on Punjab Talks

BK2204171991 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Text] The CPI-M [Communist Party of India-Marxist] and the Congress-I have urged the government to take all political parties into confidence about the negotiations being held with the Punjab militants. The CPI-M leader, Mr. Harkishan Singh Surjeet, said in New Delhi that the prime minister should clearly spell out his stand on various issues relating to the Punjab problem.

The Congress-I spokesman, Mr. Pranab Mukherjee, urged Mr. Chandra Shekhar to disclose the details of his discussions with the militants saying that the people have every right to know whether the national interests are being safeguarded. Mr. Mukherjee clarified the Congress-I stand that the party is for a negotiated settlement without compromising the unity of the country.

Representatives of the Congress-I, BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party], and the Communist Parties have begun discussions in Chandigarh to decide whether to file nominations for elections in Punjab. Mr. Pranab Mukherjee informed newsmen that a joint decision will be announced tomorrow.

The Samajwadi Janata Party spokesman, Mr. Satya Prakash Malaviya, has appealed to the Congress-I and the CPI-M not to boycott the polls in Punjab. He said election is the only viable way to bring normalcy in the state.

The Sikh Students Federation-Mehta Chawla group today announced its decision not to take part in Punjab elections. The president of the federation, Mr. Rajinder Singh Mehta, has said this in Jullunder.

Parties Want Separate Polls for Punjab

BK2304053091 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0240 GMT 23 Apr 91

[Text] The Punjab units of the Congress-I, CPI [Communist Party of India], CPI-M [Communist Party of India-Marxist] and BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] have decided to impress upon the center and the president to delink the election process in the state from the rest of the country. The parties at a meeting in Chandigarh yesterday agreed that the requisite security forces demanded by the state government for the conduct of free and fair polls would not be available if elections in the state are held as per the present schedule. They said the prime minister who was exhorting these parties to participate in the election process should also reciprocate to the demand of these parties for rescheduling the whole election process so that the contesting candidates could get the proper security. The senior leaders of these parties are meeting in Delhi today. They demand the rescheduling of elections in the state.

Talking to newsmen in Madras, the United Communist Party of India [UCPI] general secretary, Mr. Munit Sen, said that his party is not in favor of holding elections to the Punjab Assembly at this time.

Shekhar Again Denies Talks

BK2304162491 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT 23 Apr 91

[Text] Addressing a news conference in Patna this evening, the prime minister asserted that he had no talks with the militants of Punjab as reported in a section of the press. He said that elections in Punjab and Assam will be held as per schedule. Mr. Chandra Shekhar strongly denounced violence during the elections and said that elections will not be held [in Punjab and Assam] if violence-based politics prevailed.

Parties' Stand on Punjab Elections

BK2304154191 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1230 GMT 23 Apr 91

[Text] In Punjab, the Akali Dal-Badal has decided to reactivate the party and participate in the coming elections to the Lok Sabha and state assembly. This was announced by the party president, Mr. Prakash Singh Badal, at a news conference in Chandigarh this afternoon. He said the three Akali Dal factions had sometime back decided to unite under the leadership of Mr. Simranjit Singh Mann on the condition that all the factions would be dissolved and a new party be formed. But Mr. Mann never dissolved his own faction, Mr. Badal Said. He criticized Mr. Mann for his failure to forge unity in the Akali Dal and put an end to the alleged harassment of Sikhs. Mr. Badal announced that his party will contest about 70 assembly and 10 Lok Sabha seats.

Four major parties—the Congress-I, BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party], CPI-M [Communist Party of India-Marxist] and CPI—are willing to participate in the elections in Punjab provided the polling dates of the state are postponed to the end of June. This was stated by the CPI-M leader, Mr. Harkrishan Singh Surjit, in New Delhi today after a meeting of the representatives of the four parties. He said the postponement is necessary to mobilize additional paramilitary forces to provide sufficient security to the candidates. He said there should be at least 20 to 25 days for campaigning after the deployment of additional forces.

About the talks between the government and the militants, he said nobody is opposed to talks, but people want to know what is being discussed. He said the leaders of the four parties will meet the president today to discuss the Punjab question.

New Indian Federal Front Party Proposed

BK2204093291 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0830 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Text] A new political party, Indian Federal Front, was floated today. The national convenor of the Front, Mr. Rajendar Puri, says it will comprise regional parties and leading intellectuals.

Three Janata Dal Leaders Expelled From Party

BK2204131491 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1230 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Text] Mr. Arun Nehru, Mr. Arif Mohammad Khan, and Mr. Satyapal Malik have been expelled from the Janata Dal for antiparty activities. They belong to the erstwhile Jan Morcha faction which has since been revived by them along with Mr. Ram Dhan. The Janata Dal spokesman Mr. Jaipal Reddy, told newsmen in New Delhi that no decision has been taken regarding the Raj Sabha member Mr. Dinesh Trivedi, who is also associated with the Jan Morcha. Replying to a question, he said Mr. Ram Dhan is not a member of the Janata Dal though he contested the last Lok Sabha election on the party symbol.

Former Union Minister Joins Janata Dal 22 Apr

BK2204143891 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1230 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Text] The former union minister and Congress-S leader from Assam, Mr. Ved Dutta Barua, today joined the Janata Dal. He announced this in a statement in New Delhi.

'Very Powerful' Bombay Blast Kills Six

BK2004015491 Delhi Domestic Service in Hindi 0130 GMT 20 Apr 91

[Text] Last night, there was a bomb blast near the Santacruze Electronic Export Processing zone in the Andheri area of Bombay, in which six persons, including five workers of the Bombay Electric Supply and Transport undertaking, were killed. The blast was very powerful.

'Militants' Kill Prominent Kashmiri Editor

BK2304100991 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0830 GMT 23 Apr 91

[Text] In Jammu and Kashmir, militants shot dead Mr. Mohammad Shaban Vakil, editor of a prominent daily AL-SAFAR NEWS in Srinagar this morning. According to an official spokesman two siran- [traditional Kashmiri cloak] wearing youths came to his office in Magharmal Bagh area around 1030 and fired at him at close range. Mr. Vakil was rushed to the hospital where he was declared dead. The chowkidar [guard] of the newspaper chased the assailants, but they managed to escape. Security forces have launched a massive manhunt for the killers of Mr. Vakil. Journalists in Jammu and Kashmir have condemned the killing of Mr. Vakil.

5 Killed in Clash With Bangladesh Border Force

BK1904160091 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT 19 Apr 91

[Text] In West Bengal, five persons, including one BSF [Border Security Force] jawan [soldier], were killed in an exchange of fire between the BSF personnel and the Bangladesh Rifles [BDR] at Phulbari area under the Karimpur police station in Nadia District today. According to the state home secretary, all the six persons, including two BSF jawans, who were wounded in the incident have been admitted to hospitals. The encounter took place following an altercation between the BSF and the BDR personnel over the suspicious movement of some Bangladeshis in the area. Senior BSF and state police officials have rushed to the spot.

Iran

President's ETTELA'AT Interview Reviewed

LD2204204691 Tehran IRNA in English 1758 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Text] Tehran, April 22, IRNA—In his interview which appeared in the Persian daily ETTELA'AT today, President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani was strongly critical of Western hypocrisy towards the Iraqi people, and the resulting human catastrophe in that country.

Hojjat ol-Eslam Rafsanjani said: "Of course, the present situation in Iraq is something that will certainly plague the Americans and the Westerners. All those human beings killed in Iraq, the impoverishment that has swept over Iraq and the people going through so many sufferings are the questions to which the Americans should reply.

"The two-faced stands of the Americans and their allies might be based on a specific plan. At one stage they saw that Iraqi opposition groups were about to dominate Iraq and this was not what they wanted. This might have caused them to abandon their previous policy."

He was commenting on the double standards of the U.S.-led coalition which during the Persian Gulf war encouraged the Iraqi people to rise up and topple Saddam Hussayn, but then remained silent as the Ba'thist regime used weapons of mass destruction to slaughter hundreds of thousands of people—mostly Shia Arabs—and drove two million others towards the Iranian and Turkish borders.

The president went on: "In our opinion in dealing with the issue, the Allied forces and especially the U.S. which was the stage-manager were confused...Iraq was apparently defeated in the war and now they were pressing for Saddam's overthrow. But the question of who will replace him (Saddam) is a serious problem for the Westerners.

"In other words, it is very difficult for the Westerners to find an alternative (for Saddam). The probabilities hanging over Iraq are not all in the interest of the U.S. and the West. There is not one wishing to come to power in Iraq who is an advocate of the West, who can adminster that country and who can preserve Iraq's unity."

Asked whether the influx of Iraqi Kurds into Iran and their massing along Iranian borders would not bring about a situation like that of Palestinian camps and whether the Westerners have not plotted to accuse Iran of setting up camps for training of terrorists in future, he said:

"If there is any mischief behind the issue it must not be ignored. We should presume that some people might take advantage of the issue. In any case we should well fulfil our duty towards this phenomenon. On the whole, the issue of Iraqi refugees is a serious problem for not only the Islamic Republic but also Iraq and other countries.

"One cannot rule out the likelihood of such schemes and ill intentions but such dangers can be neutralized by our vigilance. We are now carrying out our human, Islamic duties. Because of such possibilities we cannot shirk our great Islamic, humanitarian task.

"We will try to return the refugees to Iraq at the first possible opportunity. While in Iran they (refugees) should stay in fenced camps away from the people of our country."

On the British proposal to set up "safe havens" for Kurdish refugees in northern Iraq, the Iranian president said that he agreed with the idea in principle, "provided it guarantees the security of the Iraqi people, not only in

the north but in the south also. You see the situation in Iraq. The Iraqi Government is attacking the people with bombs, helicopter and artillery. No country and government can be found in the world, that massacres and bombs its people, or uses artillery fire to shell its own towns.

"In any case those who are responsible for the current situation in Iraq should prevent this savagery. Iraqi people should have security, be able to live in their own homes and state their views. Anyway it is the Iraqi people who should decide for themselves not Iran or others."

Asked whether any danger might threaten Iranian pilgrims in Mecca in view of the presence of American forces in Saudi Arabia and what agreements have been reached (between Tehran and Riyadh), Hoj. Rafsanjani replied:

"Apparently foreign forces are not present in Mecca, Medina and Jeddah where pilgrims are to assemble. Ways of perfoming the Hajj have been specified as we wish and there is relative trust in implementation of agreements. However, we should be on alert in order not to incur a loss."

On rumours about contacts between Iran and the U.S., he said "You know, the Swiss Embassy in Tehran is functioning as the interests section of the U.S.

"It is a political norm for two countries having no diplomatic relations to select the embassy of a third country to operate as its interests section. The Americans send their messages to our foreign ministry through the Swiss Embassy. They are studied and response to them is given to the Swiss diplomats. This might be done through such countries as Turkey.

"The Americans have sometimes tried to speak about the Western hostages held in Lebanon. During the McFarlane issue they tried to negotiate on the hostages. In the World Court at The Hague, legal representatives of Iran and U.S. have been engaged in talks for years on legal disputes between the two countries.

"Sometimes some other issues might come up (at the Hague). The hostage issue is an example. Each of the two countries want the other side to use its influence in Lebanon (to secure the release of Iranian and Western hostages). The U.S. has influence on the Israelis and the Phalangists. The Islamic Republic's spiritual influence on Lebanese Muslims is a natural affair."

On the future of ties between Tehran and Washington, the president said "We have seen that the U.S. is hostile to the Islamic Revolution. Apart from other issues, Washington's freezing of Iranian assets meant nothing but its hostility to the revolution.

"Why have the Americans blocked our people's assets? Is it something other than an act of bullying? They have no logicial reasons for this. I think the situation will remain the same as it is now as long as the Americans maintain their hostile attitude towards the Islamic revolution.

"The Americans must prove, in practice and not in words? To our people and the country that they have changed their policies and that their stand is at least equal to that of Europe and other states."

ETTELA'AT asked the president his views on the regional security plans proposed by Persian Gulf states in the wake of the Iraqi defeat one being the 6+2 plan which includes Syria and Egypt as the defender of the six Persian Gulf states, and the other the 6+1 plan which includes Iran.

"This is not yet at the level of a treaty," replied Hashemi-Rafsanjani, "what we want, and have told them before, is that the real security rests on the sincere cooperation among regional states. We like to cooperate with them, and they should not worry that Iran wants to invade them simply because it is the biggest and the most powerful country.

"We should also not be concerned of their attempts to bind the region and its interests to the foreigners. We all work together, and safeguard the expediencies of the region. This would lead to the real security."

"We should make a contract and prepare a formula for this issue, and we are talking in this regard. It may be in the form of a statement or a political protocol, and not necessarily a treaty. The issue may settle within this cooperation and good mutual relation. We are still talking, and there are some discussions underway between Iran and them (Persian Gulf states) in the security council."

On Iran's role in a security treaty for the region in the aftermath of the collapse of communism and the military destruction of Iraq, and whether the masterminds of the plan aim at limiting the power of, and depriving Iran of its freedom of action? [sentence as received]

"Whatever their objectives, we consider cooperation and sincerity necessary for safeguarding the expediencies and interests of the regional people. We can deprive arrogance of its pretext for hegemony over the region, and thus prepare the ground for the expectations of Islam."

On Iran's position on the Palestinian issue, he said "we have expressed our opinions times and again. Palestine belongs to the Palestinians, and expulsion of part of the Palestinian people from their homeland is not acceptable. They are the sons of the soil and must return to their native place.

"This is our opinion about Palestine. We have never recognized, and accepted Israel as a government... We certainly want the issue of Palestine to be settled."

On Iran's cooperation to settle the Afghan issue, Hojjat ol-Eslam Rafsanjani said "We are always called for help, but we cannot provide a practical help, unless the general basis of the issue is clear. In the opinion of the Islamic Republic of Iran, public opinion in Afghanistan should also be referred to. The division of power is not correct, and free, nationwide and general elections which includes the Afghan women should be held there.

Comments on Foreign Policy

LD2204182191 Tehran IRNA in English 1314 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Text] Tehran, April 22, IRNA—President Akbar Hashemi- Rafsanjani today rejected charges that Iran had revised its "revolutionary policy" stressing that his government's foreign policy was in line with the Islamic revolution.

Responding to the critics inside and outside the country of Tehran's decision to re-establish or promote ties with Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Egypt, Sudan, Yemen, as well as to release Roger Cooper, a Briton jailed in Iran on spying charges, the president said:

"These people are following certain political objectives otherwise these developments (resumption of ties, etc.) are precisely on the basis of and in line with the Islamic revolution."

The president made the remarks in a lengthy interview with the afternoon daily ETTELA'AT published today.

"We have always tried since the time of his emminence the imam to have the Hajj (pilgrimage) again. The imam even issued specific instructions to this end. But the demands which Saudi Arabia did not accept at the imam's time, have now been accepted and they have agreed that we hold the antipathy (towards pagans) ceremony (rally) there. Regarding the number of the pilgrims the problem is our own. We have temporarily agreed on 110,000 pilgrims. In the coming years, God willing, there would be no restrictions. So, this is what we were after.

"In the region too, it is for some time that we have come to the conclusion that it is not in the interest of the revolution to have encounters with these small states. Otherwise they would immediately stick to the U.S. thus providing a window for further influence of the arrogance in the region.

"Furthermore, these countries would easily put their oil and everything else at the disposal of the U.S. and others because they would have to be blackmailed for the activities of the others. Principally, it is in the interest of Islam and the region to be friends and cooperate with them.

"The issue of Roger Cooper was also clearly explained by the judiciary chief. That is he had served his prison terms but the good thing they did was that they kept the prison term secret and its practical result was that we succeeded in bringing back Mr. (Mehrdad) Kowkabi (Iranian student jailed in Britian) to Iran. And there is no point in keeping someone who has served his prison terms...but some have taken advantage of this natural issue as is the case anywhere else in the world. I think if we talk to these people (critics) face-to-face they would accept the reality."

In his interview the president also talked about relations with the U.S., the Iraqi refugees, regional security arangement, Palestine, and Afghanistan.

UK Minister Visits Refugee Camps in Azerbaijan

LD2004002191 Tehran IRNA in English 1842 GMT 20 Apr 91

[Text] Piranshahr (W. Azerbaijan), April 20, IRNA—Britain's overseas development minister, Lynda Chalker, visited Iraqi refugees camps in West Azerbaijan Province today, and was moved by their plight.

Ms. Chalker described the sight of half-starved men, women and children, braving adverse weather conditions and the ardous mountain paths to flee Saddam Husayn's reign of terror, as "a nightmare," and said Iranian people and officials have done their best to cope with situation.

She said the refugees are badly in need of medicine, and their condition is "terrible".

"The best way is to facilitate the return of the refugees to their homeland, however, world aid for them should continue until that time," she said without elaborating.

But refugees who recounted to the British minister the crimes of the Ba'thist regime, said they will not return to their country as long as Saddam Husayn is in power in Baghdad.

Iran is single handedly dealing with the influx of over a million Iraqis, trying to escape the brutal wrath of an unpopular regime in the wake of their betrayal by the Western powers.

Reports on Funds

LD2104205191 Tehran in English to Europe 1930 GMT 21 Apr 91

[Text] The British minister of overseas development and deputy foreign minister, Lynda Chalker, has paid a visit to the Iraqi refugees' camps in Western Azerbaijan Province. Later, in an interview, Mrs. Chalker referred to her visit to the refugee camps, saying that what she has seen was like a dream and that the mass flow of the refugees had astonished her. She said Britain had allocated 20 million pounds to meet the needs of the refugees, which will be given to Turkey and Iran. Mrs. Chalker said the best way to help the Iraqi refugees was to pave the way for their return home.

Praises Refugee Aid

LD2104185891 Tehran IRIB Television Second Program Network in Persian 1600 GMT 21 Apr 91

[Text] UK Deputy Foreign Secretary Lynda Chalker left Tehran today, being seen off by Va'ezi, her Iranian counterpart, after visiting Iran to survey the status of Iraqi refugees and their preliminary needs. Before departing, Chalker told our correspondent:

[Begin Chalker recording in English] I came to Iran to try to assess how Britain can continue to help the Iraqi refugees which you have given place to here, in Iran. In my discussions with Foreign Minister Velayati, we put forward some suggestions on ways to help. We are now working on those. Last night, the head of the British Red

Cross and Dr. (Mubarro), from my department, had very important discussions with the Iranian Red Crescent and the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent societies. We will work through the Iranian Red Crescent in helping, particularly with supplies and transport and also with the health needs which exist in the camps in West Azerbaijan. There are many camps in your country because you have received so many Iraqi refugees. Quite separately, we also talked about Anglo-Iranian matters. But, the prime purpose of my visit here was to work out how we give help to the Iraqi refugees. We hope we shall be successful in helping you here with the Iraqi refugees problem that you have so willingly taken on, and I would say to the Iranian people, who have shared their homes, their food, and their clothing with many of the refugees who have come into Iran, the whole world recognizes that Iran is also doing its best to help. We will do likewise. [end recording]

Further Reportage on Iraqi Refugee Situation

Minister Visits Camps

LD2204123291 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Text] Interior Minister Nuri-Hoseynabadi arrived in Orumiyyeh this morning. In a meeting with that province's officials, and having praised the services of the deceased engineer 'Ata'ie, the former governor-general of West Azerbaijan, he introduced 'Ali Sa'adat as the new governor-general of the province.

During the meeting, the interior minister noted the reactionary activities of the United States and a number of European countries with regard to the Iraqi refugees. He said: The initiatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran with regard to the Iraqi refugees, particularly in the border provinces, has astonished the world, and all the delegations which have inspected the conditions of the Iraqi refugees in the country have lauded the Islamic Republic of Iran's initiatives.

The interior minister then headed for the districts of Piranshahr, Sardasht, and Baneh in order to inspect the condition of the Iraqi refugees there.

Iraqi Atrocities Reported

LD2104201291 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 21 Apr 91

[Text] The crushing of Iraqi people by the government forces of that country continues. According to IRNA, an Iraqi refugee who sought asylum in the Islamic Republic of Iran last night told of the execution of 15 Muslim women in holy al-Najaf and 150 combative young people in Karbala' by the Ba'thist forces. He said: Hundreds of the inhaibitants of Shamiyah in the districts of holy al-Najaf were also arrested by Saddam's forces and were taken to an unspecified place. Another Iraqi refugee, describing the crimes of the Iraqi regime said: The forces of the Republican Guards stationed at Karbala' buried alive 200 combative Iraqis a while ago. An Iraqi refugee driver also said he, himself, witnessed the massacre of 2,000 of Irbil's inhabitants by the forces of the regime ruling over Baghdad. Also, a number of Iraqi refugees said that in one day alone, 50 Iraqi helicopters were involved in the death of over 1,000 defenseless people in (Kuh Sanjaq), which is 50 kilometers from Irbil. All of these refugees admitted that there were some Monafiqin [Mojaheddin-e Khalq] and mercenaries from some countries among the forces that were crushing the popular revolt in Iraq.

EC Officials Arrive

LD2204213191 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 2030 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Text] Georges Wohlfart, the deputy foreign minister of Luxembourg, and Claudio Lenoci, an Italian Foreign Ministry undersecretary, arrived in Tehran today. They were welcomed by Mr. Va'ezi, the Europe-America undersecretary at the Foreign Ministry.

Mr. Wohlfart, who heads an EC delegation, will meet Iranian authorities and review the methods by which the EC can aid the Iraqi refugees. Mr. Claudio Lenoci, who has also come to Tehran at the head of a delegation, will review ways to cooperate with our country's authorities in giving aid to Iraqi refugees.

Governor on Plight of Refugees

LD2204135991 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Text] Over 10,000 Iraqi refugee women and children have been housed in the Sha-e Pol-e Zahab camps. The governor general of Sar-e Pol-e Zahab, having announced this news, said:

A great number of these refugees have lost their heads of family as a result of the atrocities perpetrated by the ruling regime in Iraq and the hypocrites [reference to Mojahedin-e Khalq organization], including some who have perished as a result of cold and hunger on the impassable highways of Iraq. Meanwhile, over 70,000 other Iraqi refugees are living without any shelter under rough conditions, around the camps of Dasht-3 Zahab, because of the shortage of tents and blankets.

Remarking on the existing problems in terms of organization, nutrition, and services offered to the Iraqi refugees, he added: In view of the huge number of refugees in this region, only 1 million loaves of bread are distributed daily among them, and in the past 10 days over 200 tons of fruit, 100 tons of rice, 1 million cans of fruit and other canned food, 1,500 tons of flour, and 500 tons of potatoes donated by the self-sacrificing people of our country have been placed at the disposal of the Iraqi refugees settled in Dasht-e Zahab.

In this connection, the international organizations who speak of protecting the refugees have so far failed to fulfill even a single day's basic needs of these refugees.

The governor general of Sar-e Pol-e Zahab warned the international forums and the World Health Organization of the imminent threat of contagious diseases and diarrhoea and dysentery facing a great number of these refugees due to the warm weather in the Dasht-e Zahab region, and spoke of the necessity of setting up field hospitals and health centers in camps and other refugee settlements, for which serious and speedy action is called for.

Safe Havens Viewed

LD2204190591 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1100 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Unattributed commentary]

[Text] Following the attacks by the Iraqi Ba'thist regime's army against the people, a great flood of the oppressed people of that country have taken refuge in the neighboring countries of Iran and Turkey. This trend of mass emigration continues. Meanwhile, Iran has accepted the greatest number of the immigrants. This number—which currently exceeds 1 million people—have accepted the misery of poverty and becoming refugees for all their lives, not due to hunger and poverty, but due to the ruling tyranny and oppression. Three weeks have passed since the start of this human tragedy. During this period, the people of Iran, its state organizations and institutions have rushed relief supplies to the border regions at an unprecedented level regardless of political and economic considerations, purely for humanitarian and Islamic considerations. Despite exemplary efforts to save the lives of thousands of innocent and defenseless Iraqis by the people and officials of our country, measures taken so far cannot fully satisfy the extensive and extreme level of this human tragedy.

Furthermore, during the past few days, a number of European and international officials have visited the region and witnessed the distressing state of the refugees. At the same time, Western propaganda for help to the refugees increases every day. No practical measures have been taken. Peace, human rights, security and other phrases such as these—Western countries headed by the United States claim to be their standard-bearers—have, in practice, been scorned. They do not go further than words and slogans.

Delaying the dispatch of relief supplies vital to the refugees, differentiating between the refugees based in Iran and Turkey with regard to the means and level of assistance, putting forward small points concerning difficulties in their foreign policy as a precondition for the dispatch of aid by some countries to the Iraqi refugees based in Iran and using the opportunity to solve those difficulties, and finally speaking of the creation of safe havens in northern Iraq and the dispatch of forces to that region—all this points to one clear fact: According to experts, the oppression and homelessness of the people of Iraq are not causes of disappointment for these circles. The point on the agenda is to satisfy the same interests through other channels and by using the opportunity. The maltreatment and oppression of the people of Iraq are not limited to any particular region in that country. Therefore, the creation of safe havens in northern Iraq will in no way solve all the problems.

According to political experts, international organizations and effective powers should be thinking of establishing security to eliminate threats to, and meet the concerns of, all the Iraqi people—as well as practical steps to meet the needs of the refugees.

Velayati Departs for 3-Nation European Tour

LD2204104591 Tehran IRNA in English 0957 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Text] Tehran, April 22, IRNA—Iran's Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati, heading a political delegation, left here for Copenhagen Monday morning at the first leg of his tour of three European countries.

The visits are taking place at the invitation of foreign ministers of Denmark, Ireland and Luxembourg.

Velayati will discuss issues of mutual interest and exchange views regarding international issues with ranking officials of the three countries.

Nigerian Petroleum Minister Arrives for Talks

NC2304060191 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0430 GMT 23 Apr 91

[Text] Mr. Jibril Aminu, the Nigerian petroleum resources minister, arrived in Tehran last night and was received by Iranian Petroleum Minister Aqazadeh-Kho'i. Mr. Aminu is carrying a message from the Nigerian president for President Hashemi-Rafsanjani. He will discuss future OPEC policy in his meeting with our petroleum minister.

Velayati Meets With Nigerian Justice Minister

LD2104112891 Tehran IRNA in English 1042 GMT 21 Apr 91

[Text] Tehran, April 21, IRNA—First Vice-President Hassan Habibi Sunday stressed that security in the Persian Gulf will not be lasting without Iran's participation.

Habibi made the remark in a meeting with the visiting Nigerian Minister of Justice Prince Bola Ajibola here Sunday.

He also criticized international organizations which claim to defend human rights for neglecting the plight of over one million Iraqi refugees in Iran.

Ajibola who arrived here Friday submitted a message to Habibi from the Nigerian president to his Iranian counterpart President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani. He also voiced willingness of the Nigerian Government and nation to expand ties with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Criticizing harassment of the Iraqi dissidents by the Baghdad government, he lauded Iran's humanitarian move in accepting and sheltering hundreds of thousands Iraqi refugees.

The Nigerian minister Saturday met with several Iranian officials including foreign minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati.

Memorandum Signed

NC2204055691 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0430 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Text] At the end of the visit by the Nigerian minister of justice, a memorandum of understanding on legal and judicial matters was signed. Legal and judicial cooperation and exchanges between the Justice Ministries of the two countries, student exchanges, and mutual transfer of books and publications are included in this memorandum.

The Nigerian minister of justice left Tehran this morning after signing the memorandum. Before he left, Prince Bola Ajibola called his visit to Iran fruitful. Referring to his inspection of Iran's prisons, he said: The administration is so advanced they can be used as a model for all countries in the coming decade.

The Nigerian minister of justice called Iran's campaign against narcotics one of the greatest successes of the country and added: Iran and Nigeria have similar circumstances in drug smuggling. This visit gave us the opportunity to view the installations of this organization and its activities. He said that Iran and Nigeria will cooperate and exchange views in this field.

French Envoy Presents Credentials, Offers Aid

LD2204164591 Tehran IRIB Television Second Program Network in English 1600 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Text] President Hashemi-Rafsanjani today received the new French ambassador in Iran, Mr. Hubert Colin de Verdiere. At the meeting, the new French chief diplomat to Iran presented his credentials to Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani, and called for the expansion of bilateral ties in all fields.

The French diplomat also told the president that Paris will increase its relief aid to Iraqi refugees, and believes that the international community should do more in providing relief aid to them.

Ahmad Khomeyni Rejects Ties With United States

NC2304093291 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0430 GMT 23 Apr 91

[Text] Participants in the Islamic Republic of Iran's fourth seminar for cultural representatives serving abroad visited the consecrated mausoleum of the great leader of the Islamic Revolution, His Eminence Imam Khomeyni—may his soul be sanctified—yesterday afternoon and met Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin Hajj Seyyed Ahmad Khomenyni. During this meeting, Mr. Abtahi, the deputy minister for international affairs in the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, explained the cultural representations' mission abroad.

Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin Hajj Seyyed Ahmad Khomeyni then stressed the need to keep Islamic rulings as the basis for all departments of life. He also called on all the diplomatic and cultural representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran abroad to follow the thinking and aspirations of His Eminence the Imam, in formulating the path for combating world arrogance, spearheaded by the United States, for the oppressed nations.

He rejected rumors of any form of establishment of ties between Iran and the United States and emphasized: The directives of his eminence the imam, may God's blessings be upon him, are extremely clear on the subject of relations with the United States. There is no doubt whatsoever on this subject for anyone. Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin Hajj Seyyed Ahmad Khomeyni added: Just as the leader of the revolution, His Eminence Ayatollah Khamene'i, has stated: The establishment of ties between Iran and the United States is impossible. Our differences with the United States are on the issue of Islamic values and these values should not be made a scapegoat.

In conclusion, his eminence stressed: The history of our Islamic revolution is replete with struggles between our culture and domination by foreigners. Wherever they may be, the offspring of the revolution must be vigilant regarding Islam and the revolution and should protect the Iman's thinking and aspirations.

Commentary Views U.S. Objectives, Saddam

NC2204135491 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 9 Apr 91 p 2

[Editorial: "What Objective is the United States Pursuing by Supporting Saddam?"]

[Text] The pillars of the Baghdad regime's palace of imaginations have disintegrated and Saddam is preparing to take revenge on the oppressed people of Iraq for his humiliating defeat. The outcome of this disgraceful revenge has, until now, been the disintegration of the remnants of Iraqi economy and the homeless issue of that country's people.

The homeless issue does not only apply to the Kurds in northern Iraq. Today there are 14 million Iraqis who are confused and homeless, are facing famine, sickness, and hunger, and are on the verge of complete destruction, death, and "genocide."

If we see that the Iraqi Kurds' homeless issue has attracted more attention, it is because they have found the opportunity to flee from the land of famine and death by the hand of the Baghdad executioner. A large part of the Iraqi population in the south, center, west, and other places is still crying out for help under the boot of the Ba'thist executioner. There is no one there to hear their crys.

These are the circumstances James Baker will meet on his second Middle East trip since Iraq's defeat. His mission is to pave the way for a final conclusion to be drawn for Washington's officials on the following four major points:

1. The structure of future governments in dependent regional countries;
2. The structure of regional security in a way that America's interests will be given priority;
3. Acquiring the necessary guarantees for Israel's future; and
4. Convincing regional countries to preserve the Baghdad regime.

Washington sees that it is to its benefit for parts of Baker's mission not to be discussed openly, but for more serious attention to be paid to his deeds. The structure of future governments in dependent regional countries is the major issue in this connection. Baker's mission is to use threats, denigration, and corruption—or any other suitable method which is common within the framework of American diplomacy—to bring these four points closer to a conclusion so that the grounds can be paved for Bush's imminent trip to the region to be successful.

Under such conditions, Washington has started to overtly and covertly strengthen the Baghdad regime. With this policy it is pursuing specific objectives. The preservation of Saddam from Washington's point of view is tantamount to the "preservation of the crisis" in the region and can justify the continued presence of NATO and U.S forces' free hand in the region. Moreover, Saddam is in a situation where he will accept any humiliating proposal by Washington. He is thinking only of "staying" and is prepared to give in to any humiliation in order to do so. The existence of such an element in Iraq is a point in America's favor, and this is why Washington quickly granted Saddam permission to use any method to stifle the cries of the Iraqi people.

Some unconfirmed reports indicate that America has returned some of the Iraqi Army's equipment that was left in Kuwait to Saddam so that he can crush the popular uprising in Iraq with this equipment's help.

Turkey's harsh approach to the Iraqi refugees on the common Turkish-Iraqi border gains its true meaning within this context. Both Turkey and America, and the other Western countries, want to exploit the Iraqi refugee issue to feign support for the Iraqi people's uprising, while their deeds are such that they cannot hide their despicable smile of satisfaction on the savage suppression of this uprising.

Turkey has opened fire on the Iraqi refugees at the borders. The death of homeless and hungry children in the arms of their bereaved mothers is NATO's gift to the refugees. This gift is being handed to the Iraqi people by Turkish gun barrels.

Irrespective of all humanitarian issues, Turkey's President Ozal has placed the responsibility for the refugees' nourishment directly on the UN's shoulders. He has clarified that the refugees should be settled inside Iraqi borders and that this calls for the deployment of UN forces in Iraq's Kurdish-inhabited areas.

Ozal's remarks are yet another proposal within the framework of rumors on Iraq's dismemberment which the Turkish president hopes to obtain along the lines of his initial plan on the "federalization of Iraq."

When NATO could have done something which would have been to the benefit of the Iraqi people and against the Baghdad regime, it explicitly and intentionally avoided doing so and cooperated with Saddam. Today it is propounding new plans within the framework of its future objectives; and these plans will ultimately be to the detriment of the Iraqi people.

America can come to terms better with a denigrated, helpless, and isolated Saddam and impose its plans on him. This is precisely why one of Baker's unannounced missions is to study effective ways to keep Saddam in power. Within the framework of fulfilling this plan, Bush is trying to pretend that Saddam's downfall will create a "power vacuum in the region." In an interview, Bush recently stated explicitly that "the creation of a power vacuum in Iraq is not to the benefit of America and regional countries."

This clear statement is tantamount to Washington's overt efforts to preserve Saddam. It is within this mindset that all of America's recent decisions to help Saddam and to betray the Iraqi people's uprising find their true meaning.

Nevertheless, what has surfaced today does not reflect all the aspects of Washington's policies on the region. Turkey and all the NATO members had called openly for Saddam's downfall. But today they are firing at those who revolted against Saddam. Bush says that he is "impatient" for his trip to the Middle East and claims that America wants to help the Middle East peace process.

These satanic words smack of more plots which the governments and nations of the region should alertly understand and thwart.

Commentary Criticizes U.S. Arms Sales to Iraq

LD2104044791 Tehran in English to Europe 1930 GMT 20 Apr 91

[Text] Diplomatic sources of the United Nations say, Iraq gave a list of its missiles and biological and chemical weapons to the UN secretary general on Friday. The measure came in accordance with the UN Resolution 687. Although a complete list of these weapons had not been released before, U.S. and British Governments have termed this information as inadequate. At the same time, an expert at the U.S. Defense Department said that three years ago he had asked the pentagon officials not to send weapons to Iraq, but they took no measures to check the arms dispatched to that country because of its ongoing war against Iran at that time.

These comments were [word indistinct] on the issuance of an order by the White House on the dismissal of that official from the U.S. Defense Department. Apparently the Pentagon officials were taking measures to check any revelation of the amount of direct and indirect military aid extended by Americans to Iraq during the eight-year war, whereas the extent of U.S. arms aid to that state is not something to be kept hidden from the general public. On this very ground the Western governments by evading the existing realities, are trying to divest themselves of the liabilities stemming from the outcome of such military aid to the Iraqi regime.

In view of the (?conditions) arising out of the Persian Gulf war, it seems the U.S.-led Western coalition is seeking to find a new foothold in the region through every possible means. This policy is (?presumably) aimed at opposing the interests of the regime ruling in Iraq, whereas in the past, those countries often collaborate with each other in confronting their common enemy. Despite all the slogans and assertions of the U.S. officials and Western leaders, the delivery of weapons to Iraq still continues with the only difference being that such a measure was taken in the form of contracts between Iraq and other governments in the past, but today it is taking place clandestinely and through smuggling.

What is (?significant about) the arms manufacturing companies is solely the sale of destructive weapons and they have the least care for humanitarian and national motive in the pursuit of this goal. One has to wait and see if the dispatch of the list of chemical and biological weapons by Iraq to the United Nations will entail revelation of those plans which have provided Baghdad with those weapons.

Security Official on Drug Seizures, Operations

LD2104075291 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0740 GMT 20 Apr 91

[Telephone conversation with Brigadier Abu, official in charge of the head office of the struggle against narcotics of the security forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran, by unidentified correspondent; place and date not given—recorded]

[Text] [Correspondent] Brigadier, thank you for the time you allocated to this program. Could you please describe the activities of the head office of the struggle against narcotics of the security forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran during the past year.

[Abu] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. Hello dear listeners. The year 1369 [21 March 1990-20 March 1991]—of course the responsiblity of fighting drugs was with the Islamic Revolution Committees then—was a turning point in the struggle of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The success was noticeable regionally and even on a world scale. The total amount of narcotics that the Pasdar [Guard] brothers discovered last year was nearly 30 tonnes of different types of drugs, either in heavy or light batches. Over 20,000 smugglers were captured. The total number of addicts discovered was over 66,000; they were handed over to rehabilitation centers and the prison organization. There were 170 clashes with armed smugglers; 25 of these were destroying operations—extensive operations such as Nasr operation, 15th Khordad operation, and mid-Sha'ban operation. Operations such as these in the desert were unprecedented.

[Correspondent] Honorable brigadier, with regard to the merger of the country's security forces, what proposals does the office have for the year 1370 [21 March 1991-20 March 1992]?

[Abu] With the merger of the security forces, we shall expand our work to implement these proposals: God willing, we shall be present on the scene more extensively and forcefully. Thanks to God, we have started this year's work with more power. During the first few days of Farvardin [Iranian month starting 21 March], we discovered over one tonne of morphine in West Azerbayjan. In Khorasan, our brothers smashed several extensive networks. This is only the start of our work in the new year. We hope that with the merger of the forces, we can witness the achievement of the third stage [as heard] of our aims. This year has been set aside for reducing the amount of drugs. We hope to make progress in the reduction stage, which will lead—God willing—to the elimination stage with the help of our dear people.

[Correspondent] Thank you.

1.5 Tons of Narcotics Seized

LD2104182791 Tehran IRNA in English 1658 GMT 21 Apr 91

[Text] Tehran, April 21, IRNA—Drug fighters in Iran discovered 14 principal suppliers of narcotics between April 5 and April 21 killing three traffickers in armed encounters with them and seizing at least 1.5 tons of narcotics and a considerable haul of weapons. Fighting occurred betwen drug-fighters and traffickers on a desert area in Sistan-Baluchestan Province of Iran, south east of the country. The General Department of Narcotics Control said in a report Sunday that 512 drug traffickers had been arrested over the 15-day period, 23 of them Afghan nationals.

Drug Traffickers Arrested

NC2204071791 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0430 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Text] From 4 to 21 April law enforcement agencies arrested the main traffickers in 14 narcotics production and distribution networks in the provinces of Tehran, Khorasan, Kerman, Sistan va Baluchestan, the Central Province, and Fars, as well as from the Qom district. They were turned over to the judicial authorities.

According to the Central News Unit, the law enforcement agencies arrested 512 drug smugglers and seized 1,620 kg of various kinds of narcotics, four weapons, and

39 vehicles during their patrol and ambush operations. The report states that during the 21 March to 4 April period, 709 addicts were rounded up from all over the country and turned over to the judicial authorities.

Tehran Law Enforcement Chief on Merger Forces

LD2204174591 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1230 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Text] The commander in chief of the law enforcement forces of Greater Tehran, Brigadier Oqba'i, described the aims and the means of the activities of the law enforcement forces throughout Tehran Province during a news conference at noon today. He said: With the merger of the three former forces of Islamic revolution committees, police, and gendarmerie, the law enforcement forces of Greater Tehran will start their activities in seven regions: north, east, west, south, central, Shar-e Rey, and Shemiranat. Each region will have between five and 10 security posts. They will carry out their duties to the best of their ability as before.

He added: Security personnel will also be responsible for the security of the city and the struggle against narcotics and social vice. The people of Tehran can cooperate with the law enforcement forces as before. He said that the main base of the Greater Tehran law enforcement forces headquarters will be the Police University located at Dr 'Ali Shariati Avenue.

He continued: Up to now, law enforcement forces personnel have been able to discover 580 kilograms of narcotics and smash three large narcotic gangs in their sphere of operations. The wrongdoers were handed over to the relevant authorities. He added: Eight long vehicles and two motor cars that used to transport smuggled narcotics, together with 30 million rials in cash, were seized.

*Law Enforcement Forces Reportedly Merge

91AS0809A London KEYHAN in Persian 4 Apr 91 p 1

[Text] The law to merge the law enforcement forces, which was ratified by the Majles nine months ago, was finally implemented on Monday this week, and the national gendarmerie, the national police force and the Islamic revolution committee were merged into one single force called the "law enforcement force." Brigadier General Mohammad Sohrabi, previously the commander of the national gendarmerie, was appointed commander of the law enforcement force."

Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i, the leader of the Islamic government, appointed Brigadier General Mohammad Sohrabi in special ceremonies on Monday, 12 Farvardin [1 April].

"Upon the proposal of the minister of interior and because of the competence and commitment that you have displayed in the course of your service in the past, I appoint you commander of the law enforcement force of the Islamic Republic of Iran. This young force, which is a collection and result of all the experiences and competence of the security elements of the Islamic Republic, must be organized and administered at the highest level of commitment and capability. In it, revolutionary, committed, competent and sympathetic individuals should bring security to its height in terms of quality in accordance with all principles, and this force must establish security, order and tranquility along with Islamic ethics throughout the country."

Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i also appointed Reza Seyfollahi, an official of the Guards Corps, as the commander of security information of the law enforcement force. The decree appointing Brigadier General Seyfollahi is as follows: "Upon the recommendation of the minister of interior and in consideration of your revolutionary history, competence and self-sacrificing service in various military and security positions, I grant you the rank of Brigadier General and transfer you from the Guards Corps to the law enforcement force of the Islamic Republic and appoint you commander of the security information of that force. It is hoped that such a competent element as yourself given this responsibility will bring about coordination with the General Office of Security Information of the commander-in-chief and double the competence, speed and proper action of this force."

Sheykh Mohammad 'Ali Rahmani was also appointed as the director of the ideological and political agency of the law enforcement force. No definite job or responsibility has yet been determined for Brigadier General Mortazavi, the former chief of the national police, who supported the merging of the security forces, and Mokhtar Kalantari, the general commander of the Islamic revolution committee.

Majles Deputy Critical of Government Information

LD2104111191 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran Second Program Network in Persian 0450 GMT 21 Apr 91

[Remarks by Deputy Morravaji, representatives of Borujerd, at the Majles session in Tehran on 21 April—live]

[Excerpts] [passage omitted] Unfortunately we have a bad habit. If an obedient person accepts everything we say, if they don't express an opinion, we call that person interesting and cooperative. If he expresses an opinion as advice or guidlines or suggestions, however, we label that person as obstinate; we put aside true and loyal people. [passage omitted]

Suggestions from those who care will surely help our affairs. Unfortunately, we have become accustomed to this Islamic way of thinking. On this matter, if the representatives of the Islamic Consultative Majles—who are representatives of the people—talk of the people's problems, they are confronted in a bad way. If representatives or other officials criticize an organization, it is because they care; because they want problems and difficulties to come into the open so that, God willing, the situation can improve. [passage omitted]

You know that once in a while officials of the executive branch, especially the esteemed president, submit a certain amount of information to the people concerning the trend in growth and activities. They give certain figures and statistics. Well, obviously these facts and figures are based on correct sources and reach us through different channels. But what we really feel in society is—in many cases—different from the figures announced by responsible officials.

A debate exists; the learned ones are here in the Majles. Should logical reason take precedence or conscience? In the end, these facts and figures rely on logical reason. We see that, consciously, in some cases society is not like that. I mean, difficulties are really harassing the people. Sometimes—the same thing may have happened to most of you—people come to us and complain or express their opinion on certain difficulties, and one cannot say anything to them as we have no information. Some things are hidden from the Majles to the extent that when people ask questions, representatives cannot answer. [passage omitted]

One of the problems that you are aware of—obviously the government is paying attention to this—is high prices. It is making the people scream and shout. Now we come and give figures that production has gone up this much; but we see the reality is different.

The other issue is the importance of the Majles. The Majles has been attacked once in awhile by a particular group of people; the same Majles that is—according to the dear Imam—at the head of everything. Obviously after the esteemed leader, after the guardship of the supreme jurisconsult, the Majles is at the head of everything. Unfortunately, we see that the Majles is confronted in a bad way; it is not above anything. As an example, certain things happen in the country that the deputies are not involved with; they don't know what is going on. The easiest way for the people to find out what is going on is through their representatives. The people cannot contact ministers directly. [passage omitted]

We all heard about Roger Cooper's release [words indistinct]. We don't want to criticize the reason for his release. Well, it was deemed advisable, carried out in a correct way, and no one has the right to ask why. But it would have been good if it was announced—especially since a few days ago it was announced that no deals are being made. If this was not announced, it would have been more understandable. When a few days before they make that announcement, we see that immediately after the arrival of our brother, Mr. Kowkabi, he is released, well it makes you think! I am not saying it really was like that; I don't want to say it. But it makes one think. [passage omitted]

*RESALAT Report on 20 Feb Majles Session

91AS0645A Tehran RESALAT in Persian 21 Feb 91 p 5

[Excerpt]

Report on Yesterday's Open Session of the Majles

Legislative and parliamentary division. The open session of the Majles was held yesterday morning with Hojjat ol-Eslam Hashemian presiding.

In this meeting, the representatives of Sanandaj, Ilam, and Khoy spoke as pre-agenda speakers, and then the Majles went into session.

In this meeting the double urgency of the proposal to determine the price of gasoline at 40 rials per liter was ratified, and the examination of the proposal was postponed to the next session.

Below you shall read the pre-agenda speeches and the ratifications of the Majles.

Morteza Zarringol, the Representative of the People of Sanandaj

The first pre-agenda speaker of the open session of the Majles yesterday was Morteza Zarringol, the representative of the people of Sanandaj, who paid tribute to Guards Corps Day and the third of Sha'ban [birth of Imam Hoseyn] and emphasized:

The Guards Corps must always remain strong and powerful at the side of the Islamic revolution in order to preserve its fruits and must certainly avoid interfering in political issues. Otherwise, such interference will be one of the major blights that will harm the Guards Corps. Certainly, some of its members have tasted the bitter experience of political interference. Surely the directives of the great leader of the revolution will help the Guards Corps achieve its goals.

In another part of his speech, referring to the great march of the people on 22 Bahman [11 February], he pointed out: The vast presence of the people and their march on 22 Bahman [11 February], especially in Kurdistan, shows the sincere love of the people for the regime, the brave officials and the beloved leader of the Islamic revolution. The iron line of noble Kurdish people signifies their strong obedience to and bonds with the leader of the revolution. It is necessary for the government and the president to pay more attention than ever before to the martyr-nurturing, Muslim region of Kurdistan and to eliminate the problems that have caused suffering in that area since the times of Taghut [Satan;reference to the late Shah].

Continuing his speech, he referred to the problems of his constituency and said: The problem of unemployment and at times erroneous failure to approve the competence [of employment applicants] are destroying the young people of Kurdistan like a plague. Despite its great wealth, Kurdistan is one of the most deprived areas and its people among the poorest in the country. Until the annual income is improved and unemployment is ended, we shall face major political, economic, social and cultural problems in that province. Carrying out the project to study the province and explore the rich resources of the Kurdistan mountains will not only bring about the creation of a changing and balanced society in that

province, but will end all political, economic, and social disorder. [passage omitted on unemployment]

Alongside the revitalization of agriculture and animal husbandry in Kurdistan, the creation of factories and job-creating workshops and attracting and absorbing capital from other provinces by both ministries of industry are among the major needs of the province. The independence of the teacher training college of Sanandaj from the Razi University of Bakhtaran and the establishment of technical and agricultural engineering and other colleges will eliminate cultural poverty. I ask the distinguished head of the judicial branch to pay more attention to Kurdistan. The people of the region have many problems in connection with the Islamic revolutionary courts throughout the Province of Kurdistan. It is hoped that serious steps will be taken to eliminate these problems without delay.

He also issued reminders to the Ministry of Islamic Guidance and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs concerning the embassies and cultural centers and said: Unfortunately, most embassies and cultural centers have forgotten their main duties and resemble more money exchange centers than cultural centers and embassies. Of course, there are ambassadors, such as the competent ambassador and Hezbollah brother, the honorable brother Mohsen Paka'i, and the able Mr. Sazgara, the hard-working and capable ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Thailand, for whose kind and compassionate treatment the members of the national youth volleyball team and I are most grateful. We hope the Ministry of Foreign Affairs appreciates these compassionate and able persons and values their efforts.

In another part of his speech, Zarringol referred to the Persian Gulf war and said: Saddam Husayn's acceptance of UN Resolution 660 showed that the Ba'thist regime can never be trusted. Those who always follow their emotions at the start of the war wanted Iran to take part in this war. They must know that if they had such an idea in mind, they must await the day their true faces will be revealed to the Muslim people of Iran. It has become clear that the neutral stance of the Supreme Security Council of the country was an appropriate and valuable action. The meaning of human rights for the Westerners, and particularly the Americans, has become clear. Instead of driving Iraq out of Kuwait, they destroy Iraq and kill the defenseless people. With the money of the regional reactionaries, Japan and treacherous Germany, Iraq has been destroyed. Of course, the noble people of Iran are fully prepared to host the Muslim people of Iraq.

Continuing his speech, the speaker emphasized: The Muslims of the world and the region must drive the Western forces and the criminal United States from the region through complete unity. They must bring about the awakening of the Muslim nations in other nations, especially in Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Algeria, Iraq, and other Islamic countries. They must resort to Islam in order to prepare for the freedom of all of them from the chains of oppression and the alienated rulers.

Hashem Hejazi, the Representative of the People of Khoy

The third and last [as published] pre-agenda speaker of the open session of the Majles yesterday was Hashem Hejazi of Khoy.

He said: Today, after 1,400 years of Islamic history, we witness the blossoming and power of pure Mohammadan Islam. For eight years, when our revolution stood bravely against the heathens in a lopsided war and submitted to all slanders and accusations, some who could not intellectually tolerate the sufferings of the revolution escaped from colleges and universities, most to the aggressive West, and declared most shamelessly that Iran has reached a deadlock and become isolated. The sword-wielding enemy as well has filled the world with its propaganda about Iran's belligerency. Suddenly, the Persian Gulf war revealed the secrets and showed the truth. They had to admit Iran's power even in the Middle East and regard our neutral stance as peaceloving as well as a source of inspiration for the whole world.

He added: The global oppressors came to the Persian Gulf in order to sever the vital roots of the Muslims under the pretext of liberating Kuwait, continuing their evil acts to the extent of destroying a baby food factory, schools and hospitals and still claiming the restoration of human rights. Nevertheless, a group of simpleminded people believed it and wanted to stain the clean hand of Islam with their blood. Thank God, the great leader of the revolution and the honorable president saved us from this dangerous situation.

Mr. Hejazi added: If instead of attacking the Islamic country of Kuwait, Saddam had attacked the usurping and bloodthirsty Israel, then he could have seen the gathering and unity of the Muslims of the world and their rebellion, and then the leader of the Muslims would certainly have issued the necessary decrees to liberate oppressed Palestine. But Saddam is a traitor who wants to destroy Iraq.

In another part of his speech, he said: Law is valuable when the legislator is respected. The implementation of the ratifications of the Majles indicates respect for the legislator. It is truly time to ask a question. It has been 10 years since the law of the Islamic councils has been ratified, but it has not yet been implemented. And what is being done with the law concerning the freed prisoners of war who were captives in a strange land and captives of the nonsensical and mindless bureaucracy in this country?

He added: In fact, why does the government not act seriously in regards to the advancement of the provincial cities, and why does it not transfer the scientific centers, including the universities, colleges and art colleges, to the provincial cities to eliminate such problems as housing, transportation and migration?

It should be mentioned that the city of the faithful, Khoy, has frequently requested the establishment of a

teacher training university, medical and midwifery colleges and agricultural, technical and art schools and is prepared to cooperate in any way, but no great effort has been seen in this regard.

He said: The building of a fully-equipped 300-bed hospital, the creation of a heart unit, the creation of three 24-hour treatment centers in three areas of town, the creation of a first-rate medical laboratory within the city limits, with the transfer of land, as well as the establishment of a blood bank in addition to the creation of a 50-bed hospital in the oppressed areas of the city are among the vital needs of the people. Referring to the problems of his constituency, he called for an investigation of the postponed projects.

In conclusion, Mr. Hejazi said: The lack of housing and the unpleasant situation between landlords and tenants, the unstable prices of goods, excessive inflation, the increase in taxes and the price of petroleum products, bureaucracy, waste of time on the part of the people, the lack of entertainment for the young, and numerous other problems require serious support from the government.

'Ali Karam Mohammadian, the Representative of the People of Ilam

'Ali Karam Mohammadian, from Ilam, was the third pre-agenda speaker of the open session of the Majles yesterday.

He said: It is most unfortunate and sorrowful for all free and enlightened human beings that the expansionism of the rulers of Baghdad resulted in the military expeditions of the super criminal of history, the antihuman United States, in the Islamic region of the Persian Gulf and imposed this uneven and unjust war on the oppressed people of the region and Iraq. The United States was harmed by the Islamic revolution of Iran and by our imam more than by any other movement or person, such that in 1357 [21 March 1978-20 March 1979], only in Iran was the slogan of death to America shouted, while now this slogan initially has become the slogan of the day in every corner of the world and among the free nations of the world.

Today, the world no longer belongs to the West. Although the United States has decided to show off its straw power to the world with its military expedition in the Middle East and the Persian Gulf and once again considers itself the ruler of the world, it is too late. This foolish action has made it more pathetic than ever before, because a sham superpower which has created so much fear in the world could not enter the region alone and has, therefore, mobilized with all its allies and entered into a war with the tiny country of Iraq. Out of helplessness, it has bombed the cities and residential areas of Iraq and killed thousands of men and women, young and old, and small children. It has taken advantage of the weakness and indecision of the leaders of Iraq in order to weaken the morale of the several-hundred-thousand-large army of Iraq and then perhaps overpower them. This in itself a great defeat for them, because if the ruler of Baghdad had attacked the U.S. ground forces immediately after the war started, not only would this have prevented the destruction of so many economic resources of the region and the lives and property of the oppressed people of Iraq, but the ground forces of Iraq would have turned the Arabian desert and the warm waters of the Persian Gulf into a deadly inferno for the soldiers of the United States and its allies. The concentration of the battle would have been on the fronts, and the United States would have come to its knees, even though even now, as the great leader said, the United States is the main loser in the war. But this great mistake of Saddam caused devastation for the Muslim people of Iraq in this destructive war.

Expressing his gratitude and appreciation for the position taken with regard to the Persian Gulf war by the great leader, the Supreme Security Council, the president and other officials of the regime, he said: As the martyr-nurturing people of Iran moved in a unanimous and unmatched march on 22 Bahman [11 February] in all cities of Iran, like stormy, roaring waves, and with its cries of Death to America expressed its anger and hatred for the oppressive presence of the world devourers in the region, all of us, including the powerful army, the self-sacrificing guards, the brave mobilization forces, the courageous tribes, the security forces and the heroic nation of Iran are all ready for the command of the great commander of the armed forces and the revered leader of the revolution and are prepared to give our lives to defend the fruits of the Islamic revolution and the ideals and ideas of our grand imam. The United States must know that it cannot withstand the iron will of the nations, particularly the one billion Muslims of the world, especially the revolutionary Muslims who have been nurtured by the Islamic revolution of Iran.

The representative of Ilam emphasized: The smoke resulting from the barbarous bombing by the Western allied countries has polluted the air in the western and southern regions of the Islamic country of Iran such that so far in several border areas of Iran, such as Dehloran and Qasr-e Shirin, there has been black rain. This problem will undoubtedly have destructive and irreparable effects on the people of this region and the cultivation, farming and pastures of our country. If Bush, this belligerent monster, resorts to chemical weapons against the people of Iraq in order to satisfy his demonic goals, since the wind usually blows from Iraq to Iran, it is not unlikely that the flames of this fire will also claim the lives of our oppressed people. Hence, it is proposed that the honorable officials make the necessary arrangements in this area. The United States shall be responsible for the unpleasant consequences of this expansionist and domineering war.

The representative of Ilam then described the problems of his constituency and said: The oppressed Province of Ilam continues to face numerous problems, because during the rule of unjust monarchy nothing was given to this province, and after the victory of the magnificent Islamic revolution, due in part to the eight years of imposed war, no investments were made in the province,

yet it has suffered most from the damages inflicted by the war. Of the total damages resulting directly from the imposed war, 2.36 percent occurred in that province, and it ranks third, after Khuzestan and Lorestan, in terms of amount of damage. If we take into consideration the area and population of the province, Ilam, with damages at about 726.94 billion rials, ranks highest of the provinces in terms of damages resulting from the war.

Of course, the visit of the great leader to this province was a blessing and it was decided that a number of developmental projects be given priority. With his special attention to the martyr-nurturing and oppressed people of Ilam, the great leader instructed us, the representatives of the people in the Majles, to pursue all the projects that he had recommended through the distinguished executive officials.

He asked the minister of roads and transport to issue orders for the implemental operations of creating the Azadi Airport and tunnel in Ilam and asked the minister of culture and higher education to take the necessary steps by appointing a competent person as the head of Ilam University.

Ratifications of the Majles

The first item on the agenda of the open session of the Majles yesterday was the draft bill on periodic rotation of judges in the country, which was discussed by the representatives. The general points were put to a vote and were not ratified.

The second item was the double priority of a draft bill with 68 signatures, entitled "Change in the Price of Gasoline from 50 Rials to 40 Rials per Liter." Qasem Sho'leh Sa'adi, the representative of Shiraz, spoke about the priority: The increase in the price of gasoline is contrary to the policy which has been frequently announced by the Economic Council, which opposes any sort of price increase. It is even contrary to the circular letter issued in this connection by the president. We think this increase in gasoline price will have many inflationary effects. The government does not have the right to increase the price of one item up to 70 percent; as far as we are concerned it has increased from 30 rials to 50 rials.

He added: The decision to increase the price of gasoline occurred when the Majles was on vacation. They took advantage of this opportunity and increased the price of every liter of gasoline from 30 rials to 50 rials.

Mr. Hoseyni-Shahrudi said in opposition to the double urgency of the draft bill: The imbalance in economic issues in the country will cause inflation. The Majles claims that it is a Majles of the oppressed and the barefooted. Which strata of the society uses gasoline? Do the oppressed use it? Twenty percent of the people have no car, and gasoline is used by those who do. They make use of it free of charge. In which country are the prices of petroleum products so low? We are subsidizing this product to a very high degree.

He added: We agree that public transportation uses gasoline. The difference will be paid to taxis. Despite this fact, the taxis do not render the slightest service to this oppressed nation.

Hoseyni-Shahrudi emphasized: Even at 50 rials per liter, I swear to God, the government is paying a subsidy. What we should do is to prevent increase in the price of goods that the oppressed in the society use. Hence, this increase will not be inflationary; on the contrary, it is in support of the oppressed.

Continuing the discussion on double urgency, Nurollah 'Abedi spoke in support of double urgency and said: The people should know that the Majles opposes any sort of increase either by the government or the private sector, considering that there is inflation in the society.

He said: During the 10 days of Fajr, the minister of petroleum announced that the prices of other petroleum products will increase. Hence, the government itself takes the lead in the country. The Majles says this price increase will disturb the economic balance in the country. Instead of giving a holiday bonus to the people for the 10 days of Fajr, we suddenly increase the price of petroleum products. Why?

He added in conclusion: God willing, we shall try not to allow the government to increase the price of other items.

Following the opposing and supporting speeches, the double urgency of the proposal was put to a vote and ratified, and the examination of the proposal was postponed to the next session.

In the open session of the Majles yesterday, the employment regulations of the security forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the bill to extend the payment deadline for the debts of the farmers in relation to the land reform laws, and the bill on permission for membership of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the (Bavel) conference concerning the control over the transporting of harmful waste products and their disposal outside the borders were announced as having been received by the officers of the Majles.

Also, the question of Mr. Taha'i, the representative of Tonkabon and Ramsar, to the minister of roads and transport concerning the reason for not granting facilities to government employees and educators to purchase housing and the reason for discriminating among the employees of the Ministry of Information and other government organizations was announced as having been received.

The Majles shall hold an open session next Sunday morning.

RESALAT Report on 5 Mar Majles Session

PM2603112091 Tehran RESALAT in Persian 6 Mar 91 p 5

[Text] Report on the open session of the Majles.

Legal and Parliamentary section—In yesterday's open session of the Majles which was chaired by Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin Karrubi, there was a discussion on the selection of Dr. Malekzadeh as minister of health and health education and following a vote he received a vote of confidence. Below is a report on yesterday's open session.

Remarks By Mohammad Salamati On Trip To Jordan

At yesterday's open session, before the start of discussions, first of all Mohammad Salamati, deputy from Tehran made some remarks in accordance with the Majles' internal regulations, in connection with the pre-agenda comments made by Mohammad Reza Bahonar on Sunday 3 March 1991. He said: In the previous open session, Mr. Bahonar in the remarks that he made, made some comments about the trip of the parliamentary delegation to Jordan and the meetings that it held there. Of course under these conditions when the criminal United States is in the region and the dangers are obvious to all, and at a time when we have to aim all our efforts to foil the plots by the United States and its allies, unfortunately we have to quarrel with one another. In the speech made by Mr. Bahonar there were so many contradictions that its goal will be clear for the people.

He continued: Mr. Bahonar in his speech criticized the brothers and said: The friends, in their meeting with King Husayn of Jordan praised his anti-Imperialistic stance.

His contradiction becomes clear since before this he had said: "The foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran is what was drawn up by the imam—may his passage to paradise be expedited—which is to recognize as illegal the regimes ruling the occupied Palestine and South Africa and the rejection of direct or indirect contact with the criminal United States. Apart from these three regimes, the expansion of ties with all other countries, is not only legitimate, it should progress, as long as the officials of the regime recognize these ties to be in the interest of the Islamic revolution." He added: Based on these same principles, the Islamic Republic of Iran established contact with Jordan and while we were there these contacts were in their last stages. We carried out the trip in connection with this mentioned policy of the government and in this general trend. If Mr. Bahonar and his friends are really supporting the government, they should have welcomed this issue. That move would have been seen as a sign of goodwill on the part of the opposing faction but unfortunately, with their confrontational approach, they did not have this goal in mind and they are only supporting the government's policies in a superficial way.

Mohammad Salamati added: In another part of his speech Mr. Bahonar confirmed the foreign policy as laid out by the great leader, which is implemented by the foreign ministry and said that the foreign policy which is being implemented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was approved by the great leader. If you really believe these issues and if you accept them, they you will know that we exchanged views with Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani and in a telephone conversation that we had he said that under these conditions and with the warm welcome that they have given you, if you do not meet them it would not be proper. When you know these things, how do you allow yourself to confront the issue in this manner? In reality, this action is seen to be an act to reject government policies. You lie when you say you support government policies, that you agree with the views of the imam, that there should be contact with these governments. In any case you should really be happy with this particular meeting now because that is what your inclinations and your actions dictate.

He remarked on Mr. Bahonar's comments on the inability of the aggressors to crush liberation movements and the Palestinian uprising and said: If you were truly honest about your remarks—the officers in charge of the Palestinian uprising met with us in Jordan and stressed that our meeting with them would strengthen their position [sentence as published]. By the way we also met with officials from Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement], the Muslim Brotherhood, and other independent Islamic groups.

He commented on the conditions in Jordan and said: Right now the plan that the United States and Zionism have drawn for Jordan is its total removal. The people of Jordan are uncomfortable at the moment. They are worried and need moral support. Any movement on our behalf raised their spirits. All sections of society and the various groups are at the moment trying to defend their territorial integrity so they have chosen one man, a king—rightly or wrongly—and they want to keep their country.

In Jordan I felt that we should do anything that would raise the morale of the people. We knew that after our meeting, there would be some who would use it for propaganda purposes, to create an atmosphere that they themselves do not believe in. This is why the two brothers that were with me were against the meeting. Even after the conversation with Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani they were against the meeting. But I told them that it was the proper thing to do, that sometimes our nation must carry out its mission therefore we must go ahead and undertake the meeting. These people need their morale boosted and this is why they showed positive emotion toward the Islamic revolution. When we saw that situation we could not refuse their simple requests. As Mr. Hashemi said in any case they had changed their position so I felt that this was necessary and I stand by my decision.

He reached a conclusion and added: From Mr. Bahonar's comments I do not wish to think that his dissent-causing remarks were aimed at overlooking the actions of the United States and its presence in the region. I do

not want to say that they are lying when they say that they support the government and the Faqih, that they want to create an issue out of all this to gain some political ground for themselves. I do not want to reach such conclusions that with such remarks, they want to do something to keep tension high, to keep the situation hot, so that they can take advantage of it. Those dear brothers who are on line, you should not allow your bosses to undertake some actions or to give you pre-written texts, just to keep the pot warm. I tell the people that the faction in line with the imam will continue not to be scared of such actions, that it will do what is best. It is not as if because of propaganda it will lose its spirit and become a useless revolutionary. That is not the case. This faction will do whatever is best in the interest of Islam and the revolution.

One of the deputies addressing Mr. Salamati: "Congratulations on your unity."

Then the discussion started on obtaining a vote of confidence for Dr Malekzadeh the candidate for the post of minister of health and health education. At first the president made a short speech, the text of which appeared in the previous edition.

'Abbas Duzduzani, Against

'Abbas Duzduzani, deputy from Tehran spoke as the first person against giving a vote of confidence to Dr Malekzadeh as minister of health and health education. He said: The impeachment of Dr Fazel was a revolutionary move based on values and this legal action was so sweet in terms of its value and it brought so much glory for the Majles, people, society, the regime and the law that anything placed near it, even though it may have been bitter, would become sweet.

In another section of his speech he said: While I respect Dr Fazel, I am not complaining about the fact that he was impeached. Following that impeachement I thought if one of the brothers who was involved with administration was in charge of the ministry of health and health education, that the work in that ministry would carry on the way it had been.

He commented on the fact that in the press, in the statements concerning Dr Fazel's failure to obtain a vote of confidence, one of the signatures belonged to Dr Malekzadeh. He added: His name being put forth after these issues has a lot of meaning. What were those actions for? We respect Dr Fazel a lot in the supreme council of cultural revolution, so what are these actions and what do they mean—these issues that are mentioned in advertisements and brought to the attention of the people?

He concluded by saying: Our dear brother Dr Malekzadeh should clarify the issues dealing with values because if those values are not obtained, I will worry.

Mohammed Reza Rah-Chamani, In Favor

Mohammad Reza Rah-Chamani, deputy from Sabzevar spoke in favor of a ministerial post for Dr Malekzadeh and gave a speech during which he remarked on the fact that during his 7 years in the Majles he has never been in favor of any of the ministers of health chosen. He said he had either spoken against them or had voted against them without speaking. He said:

Without consulting with anyone I have reached the conclusion that Dr Malekzadeh is one of the good Hezbollah faces who is dedicated. I feel that he will be a good minister of health and health education.

He continued his speech by commenting on the statements made by those against Mr. Malekzadeh because he had been deputy minister of health under Dr Fazel and would follow the same lines. He said: This is what they are saying. People have different views. Is this a good way to evaluate people? Suppose he was deputy under Dr Fazel, should one assume that he would follow along the same lines? Brothers, that is not the case. If Dr Fazel did some good work in the ministry, of course he will continue those tasks. But those things that the deputies mentioned with regard to the impeachment of the previous minister, Mr. Malekzadeh is also aware of them and he has promised his cooperation on those issues. He is also aware of the holy position of the Majles and its deputies and he will respect them. We will have no problems with him. With the morale that we know Dr Malekzadeh to have, he is in line with the Majles commission on health.

Continuing his remarks with regard to being in favor of Dr Malekzadeh, he mentioned some of his qualities which include having an aptitude for programming, knowledge of ministerial work, complete knowledge of health issues, being educated inside the country, and being in favor of choosing dedicated and Hezbollah elements and being in favor of Islamic associations and the university crusade. In conclusion he said he hoped that Dr Malekzadeh would obtain the necessary vote to become minister of health and health education.

Qasem Sho'leh-Sa'di, Proponent

Since there were no other deputies who had signed their names as being against the appointment, another one in favor gave a speech.

Qasem Sho'leh-Sa'di, deputy from Shiraz spoke in favor of Dr. Malekzadeh obtaining a vote of confidence to become minister of health and health education and said: No one can say and no one is saying that Dr Malekzadeh is weak in the management area, or that he has taken the wealth of the masses. Noone can claim that Dr Malakzedeh is not a revolutionary. The most that has been said against him is that he has signed a statement which has upset the Majles. This in fact shows his honesty.

All of you knew or guessed that he would be introduced to the Majles as minister of health and health education. Since I know of his intelligence, I think he himself predicted this issue as well. If he wanted to play political games he would have said, since in four days' time I may be introduced to the Majles as candidate for minister, I

will not sign this advertisement. In any case the advertisement was not against the Majles.

Just as the great leader and the president thanked Dr. Fazel, his action was along the same lines.

Dr. Sho'leh-Sa'di continued: Some of the special qualities present in Dr. Malekzadeh include honesty, dedication, peity, and not caring for the material world. All of you know that he is one of the famous names in his area of expertise, but despite that he does not have a private practice. He is a scientist, and I have myself seen him curing sick people in a Shiraz hospital.

He added: Dr. Malekzadeh was the head of Shiraz University, which is world-famous, following the cultural revolution and the shortages during the war, and, keeping in mind the political atmosphere in the University, he acted in the best possible way—in Shiraz with the factionalism and differences that exist.

He concluded: He is a hard worker and a scientist. If Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani has introduced his government as one that will work hard, one of the people to prove it would be Dr. Malekzadeh.

Comments By Dr. Malekzadeh

Then Dr. Malekzadeh put forth to the deputies his proposed programs for the ministry of health and health education and asked them for a vote of confidence.

He said: First of all, in terms of my ability to carry out this very difficult mission, I must say that during the 12 years since the success of the revolution I have always been in executive positions at various levels in university and then after that at the Ministry of Health and Health Education. I am well aware of the heavy responsibility and the heavy work load that I must undertake if I get the position. I am also aware of the shortages and problems that exist in health, medicine, and health education, which truly worry anyone who believes in the Islamic Republic regime. I fully believe that with cooperation from, and utilizing, the executive power, with honesty and self-sacrifice, the dedicated forces loyal to the regime of the Islamic Republic, who accept all our regime's values in full, should be placed in key and sensitive roles. There should be an atmosphere of cooperation and coordination between the forces loyal to the Islamic Republic. The thought that should govern the country should be that during the period of reconstruction, while safeguarding our principles and the regime's values, our main duty is to reconstruct and attract all the experts who are willing to give their services in the path of progress and glory for the Islamic Republic. We should stress that today the peoples of the world, especially the Muslim peoples, are searching for a role-model, so they must witness social welfare in the full extent of the word in this regime. I will make an effort to organize and improve the situation regarding health and health education in this country.

He said: To achieve what I present to the respected deputies as executive programs for the Ministry of Health, more than anything else I will need the cooperation of the Majles. If the great Majles gives this heavy responsibility to me as a servant, it must have full faith and trust in the ministry so that the executive officials of the ministry will be able to carry out their vital and heavy duties with power and stability. It is obvious that I am fully willing to establish healthy and constructive relations with the respected deputies and the various commissions in the Majles and to establish goodwill.

Dr. Malekzadeh continued: In connection with the statement that Mr. Duzduzani mentioned, I must say that our purpose in issuing the statement was to thank a colleague that we knew. Even you yourself (Mr. Duzduzani) said something about him. Of course, we had no intention—God forbid—that there should be an insult against the respected Majles. Without a doubt, a person who in the Islamic Republic believes in the regime and its strength will never have it in mind to confront the Majles. We of course believe that we should grant the Majles the utmost respect.

He said: The main priority for me in terms of executive issues is to pay attention to hygiene. In this connection special attention is paid to training and use of expert personnel in this regard in order to achieve our designated goals. Full attention will be paid to the hygiene situation in villages and the establishment of a network for referring patients.

He added: Reconstruction and activating local health management and making an effort to supervise hygiene in various locations and restaurants, the prevention and control of disease through this means, special attention to birth control as one of the basic and fundamental policies, and an effort to achieve all our goals have been set out in our program.

He commented on the programs of the Ministry of Health concerning medicines and said: Continuing and strengthening the existing plans, more attention to the quality of drugs produced in the country, more attention to the distribution of drugs, the allocated share of medicines for the provinces and the program to prevent [words illegible] are among our problems, as well as strengthening the programs to produce herbal medicines.

With regard to medical equipment, he said: To encourage and strengthen local factories to achieve self-sufficiency, to encourage the construction of new factories, supervising the distribution of this equipment and, finally, providing the equipment, even if hard currency reserves do not permit us to use other currency in such a way that could enable us always to have this equipment inside the country are also among our programs.

One of the very important plans that I have is to take steps to implement the important Item 29 of the Constitution. So far the efforts made have not been very successful, especially in the area of health. I hope that with the support of the government and the great Majles, we will be able to strengthen the public health sector through a three-stage plan to activate government offices; provide insurance for all, keep constant control

of charges; and logical, polite, but at the same time firm dealing with the private sector to achieve this important goal.

Without a doubt the help and guidance of the Majles and the government of the Islamic Republic is very important to achieve this important goal.

He added: With regard to equipment, we will give priority to the deprived areas of the country. There will be an effort to supply those deprived areas which have specialist doctors but no equipment and other areas where, because they have no equipment the specialist doctors will not go. If God is willing, we will able to provide enough equipment. At the same time, we will not forget that our major universities and the centers for specialization have certain minimum equipment requirements for training personnel. We will always keep their priority in mind.

Distribution of expert personnel and giving priority to deprived and needy areas of the country is another plan, especially with regard to the law dealing with the "messengers of health" program for which, God willing, we will prepare an executive directive before the end of the year. We hope next year we will have more medical graduates in various fields, and we hope, with the help of God, that there will be some major changes in the way we allocate doctors, especially to villages and deprived areas.

To provide the proper facilities for existing teachers in medical schools to continue their education to get doctorate degrees inside and outside the country; providing equipment for medical schools, including teaching aids and laboratory equipment; research; continuing the policy to encourage the private sector to build hospitals and clinics in order to prevent the centralization of all medical facilities in Tehran; raising the status of doctors; cordial dealings with all levels of the medical profession; an effort to provide more facilities for medical students, including dormitories, cafetarias, and transport, as far as possible; continued supervision of the medical units of the Open Islamic University; efforts to remove the existing shortcomings; necessary help to utilize unused educational space; and providing facilities to exploit the educational and health services of Iranian doctors, specialists, and professors who live abroad, and attracting them to return: These are some of the future programs of the Ministry of Health and Health Education, as mentioned by Dr. Malekzadeh.

With regard to cultural programs within the ministry, Dr. Malekzadeh said: There will be an effort to unify the ranks of the students with cultural and Islamic associations in the universities, along the lines of the guidelines of the imam—may his passage to paradise be expedited—and the order of the great leader of the Islamic revolution. There will be cultural programs which will be combined with educational issues. We hope to create a proper atmosphere in order to exchange ideas and cultural thoughts to prepare the atmosphere of the university so that the university can carry out its social role, which is to participate in all aspects of society, free from factionalism.

Without a doubt, to carry out educational and research programs needs, before anything else, a healthy atmosphere, which is at the same time dedicated.

In conclusion, he said: I am a simple teacher and servant in the university. I chose my profession deliberately and I love it with all my heart. Perhaps if I were allowed to choose I would prefer that profession to all other duties. I have been given a responsibility for a ministerial post by the president, with his confidence and, based on everything I have told you, I am fully prepared to carry out the job, with God's help, with your help, and to the best of my ability. I recognize that it is a huge honor to serve the Islamic Republic regime. You deputies of the Majles, if for any reason you refuse to give me this huge responsibility, I will no doubt be grateful. If, however, you see that I am fit to carry out this mission, I will pledge a vow in this holy place, which is the house of the people.

At the end of the session there was a vote to elect Dr. Malekzadeh as minister of health and health education which yielded the following results: total votes cast: 204. Those in favor, 149. Those against, 31. Abstentions, 24.

Therefore Dr. Malekzadeh received a vote of confidence to become minister of health and health and education.

The report from RESALAT's parliamentary correspondent from yesterday's open session indicates that the deputies attending as observers in meetings of the Economic Council, the Committee for the Allocation of Hard Currency, the Purchasing Council, the Committee to Allocate Funds, and the Council for Military Purchases were elected.

Majles deputies approved Hadi Khamene'i and Morteaza Alviri as observers in meetings of the Economic Council, Eshaq Jahangiri and Behzadiyan as observers in the Committee to Allocate Hard Currency, 'Abdol 'Ali-Zadeh and Velayati as observers in the Purchasing Council, 'Ala' and Ha'eri-zadeh as observers in the Committee to Allocate Funds, and Astaneh and Ghaffari as observers in the Council for Military Purchases.

Pakistan

Government Condemns Kabul for Scud Attacks

BK2304050091 Islamabad Domestic Service in Urdu 0200 GMT 23 Apr 91

[Text] Pakistan has condemned the Kabul regime for using large-scale destructive weapons against the Afghan population. In a letter to the UN secretary general, Pakistan's permanent representative at the United

Nations Jamshed Markar said such action affects Pakistan directly because it sparks the arrival of Afghan refugees into Pakistan.

Drawing attention to the Kabul regime's brutal Scud missile attacks on the city of Asadabad, which is located along the Pakistani border, he said that following the attacks hundreds of injured Afghans and their families started arriving at Pakistani border towns and hospitals. He reiterated the Pakistani Government's desire for a political solution to the Afghan dispute and its readiness to cooperate in peace efforts with the UN secretary general. He said the use of large-scale destructive weapons against Afghans by the Kabul regime not only disappoints but will also harm the possibilities of a political solution to the Afghan problem.

Sharif Unveils Federation-Provinces Revenue Plan

BK2004165291 Islamabad Domestic Service in English 1600 GMT 20 Apr 91

[Text] The prime minister, Mr. Nawaz Sharif, today announced the award of the National Finance Commission [NFC] providing a new, equitable and unanimous formula for distribution of the divisible pool of national revenues between the federation and the provinces. The new award, first after 1975, also provides for payment to provinces, much profit of power generation by hydel [hydroelectric] stations located in the respective provinces, development surcharges on natural gas and royalties from crude oil from the 1st of July this year.

Out of the divisible pool, which the federation and the provinces will share in a ratio of 20:80, Punjab will get 57.88, Sindh 23.28, the NWFP [North-West Frontier Province] 13.54, and Balochistan 5.30 percent of the provincial share.

Addressing a news conference in Islamabad this afternoon attended by all the four provincial chief ministers, the prime minister said that the divisible pool, which originally consisted of income-cum-corporate tax, sales tax, and export duty on cotton, had been enlarged with addition of excise duty on tobacco, manufacturers, and excise duty on sugar. The award, to be implemented from the 1st of July next, follows the total agreement on mutual accommodation between the provinces on the distribution of revenues.

Mr. Nawaz Sharif said the provincial shares have been worked out on the basis of the population of the respective provinces according to the 1981 census. These shares will be worked out again when the ratios are finally adopted after the next census.

The prime minister announced the discontinuation of the present practice of meeting budgetary deficit and picking up surpluses of the provinces. The provinces will take care of their current expenditure and debt services. He described the award as a milestone and said the resolution of this long-standing national issue in an atmosphere of mutual trust and understanding by all the provinces will be received with great relief by the nation. He congratulated the people, the chief ministers, the federal finance minister and members of the commission for successfully overcoming what had appeared to be an unsurmountable challenge. He said the NFC award is a historic event in which the whole nation will gain in terms of economic and political advancement.

Replying to a question, the prime minister said additional resources have been mobilized for development and nonproductive expenditure has been discouraged. He had instructed the Federal Finance Ministry and provinces to reduce their nondevelopment expenditure and devote more resources for development without depending on internal or external borrowing.

President Ghulam Ishaq Khan has said the NFC award on revenue sharing is yet another historic achievement of the present government which would give a real fillip to the national reconciliation, strengthen federal (?bonds), and accelerate the pace of development. He made these observations on being formally presented report of the commission by the federal finance minister, Mr. Sartaj Aziz, in Islamabad today. He observed that periodical review of this matter was a constitutional obligation which should have been fulfilled as a matter of duty but was regrettably procrastinated even by representative governments. The president said considering the state of federal finance, it is a generous award that gives all the provinces more than they could expect. Later, the president signed the order of distribution of revenues and grants-in-aid to give effect to recommendations of the commission. The finance ministers of all the four provinces were also present on the occasion.

Prime Minister Quoted on U.S. Aid Cutoff

BK2204111691 Lahore THE NATION in English 21 Apr 91 p 1

[Text] Islamabad—Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif on Saturday said that Pakistan had never requested for any aid from the United States.

He was asked to comment on the stoppage of American aid to Pakistan. In his calm and resolute posture, the Prime Minister showing full of confidence said: "We never requested for any aid from the United States to Pakistan"—PPI [Pakistan Press International].

Sharif on Deregulation, Privatization, Consensus

BK2104140491 Hong Kong AFP in English 1008 GMT 21 Apr 91

[By Masood Shah]

[Text] Islamabad, April 21 (AFP)—Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif is steering Pakistan towards a quiet revolution with his policies of economic deregulation and national consensus, analysts said.

The 42-year-old former businessman and chief minister of Punjab Province, who is a low key contrast to his charismatic predecessor Benazir Bhutto, is moving fast with his plans to solve long-festering issues that have embittered inter-provincial relations in Pakistan.

Unlike Ms. Bhutto, who picked quarrels with the Army and the president on constitutional matters in her first six months in office, Mr. Sharif has devoted his energies to economics and has scored at least two major successes.

The national finance commission resolved Saturday a 17-year-old dispute between the provinces on the distribution of resources.

The settlement, worked out by mutual agreement with the four provincial chief ministers, provides for distribution of the revenue pool on the basis of population.

The settlement leaves only 20 percent of revenues to the federal government while 80 per cent will go to the four provinces.

Effective for five years from July 1, 1991, the settlement provides 57.8 per cent of revenues for Punjab, 23.28 per cent for Sindh, while Northwest Frontier Province gets 13.54 per cent and Baluchistan 5.3 per cent.

President Ghulam Ishaq Khan welcomed the end of the long-standing dispute as "another historic achievement" of the Sharif government.

The award follows the amicable settlement of another thorny issue of apportionment of river waters among the four provinces, an issue that had been a bone of contention since Pakistan achieved independence in 1947.

Gloating over the successes, Mr. Sharif told newsmen Saturday that within 165 days of coming to power, his government had introduced "revolutionary economic and industrial policies" and sought to resolve outstanding national issues on the basis of consensus.

Avoiding the traditional political bickering and mudslinging of opponents, Mr. Sharif chose the economy as his first front of attack, his aides said.

He aims to privatise nationalised industries and banks and deregulate foreign exchange to attract investment from abroad, particularly from wealthy Pakistani expatriates in Britain, the United States and the oil-rich Gulf countries, they said.

Only a fortnight ago, his government handed over the controlling share of the first of the four nationalised banks to new owner Mian Mohammad Mansha.

The leading industrialist paid about 40 million dollars to get 26 per cent of the divested shares of the Muslim Commercial Bank, which Ms. Bhutto's late father Zulfikar Ali Bhutto had nationalised in 1974.

Officials say that two other nationalised banks—the United Bank and the Allied Bank—would also be privatised in the next few months.

Finance Minister Sartaj Aziz said another 44 nationalised industries would be sold to the private sector shortly.

While industrialists have welcomed the fast pace of privatisation, senior economists and newspapers have remained cautious, expressing doubts that Pakistan has a strong enough capital base to absorb the businesses.

Mr. Sharif's pace of economic deregulation and denationalisation was "too ambitious" and might backfire, one analyst said.

A tendency among Pakistani entrepreneurs to evade both taxes and the payment of regular dividends to small shareholders is another cause of concern, analysts said.

They pointed out that the country's prosperous textile industry paid a paltry eight million dollars in taxes to the government.

Analysts also noted that the 10 per cent of shares of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA), which Ms. Bhutto's government sold to the public in 1989, were now selling at only 70 per cent of their original value.

Undaunted by the criticisms, the Sharif government is going ahead with its economic programme. It has invited bids to launch a second airline in the private sector to compete with PIA and final approval is expected to launch a new commercial bank soon.

To promote industrialisation, the government has lifted bureaucratic red tape in setting up new industries.

Industrialists are now assured a five- to 10-year tax holiday for new mills and factories, particularly in under-developed rural areas.

The government recently lifted almost all restrictions on foreign exchange in a bid to boost investment and improve the country's exchange reserves.

In an effort to settle another controversial issue, Mr. Sharif introduced a "moderate" shariah bill in the National Assembly to satisfy the demands of religious groups. In ensuring the supremacy of the Koranic laws also, he is adopting Islamic teachings to make Pakistan "an Islamic welfare state."

Fundamentalist parties have called the government bill "inadequate and too weak," but analysts said it was yet another attempt to seek a consensus and to "take the wind out of the fundamentalists' sails."

Sri Lanka

President Urges Groups To End Violence, Talk

BK1904114891 Colombo International Service in English 1045 GMT 19 Apr 91

[Text] President Ranasinghe Premadasa today repeated the government's invitation to all concerned parties to come to the negotiating table in the name of the millions of innocent civilians in the north and east. The civilians are compelled to undergo much suffering for no fault of theirs. He added that negotiations can commence with the declaration to eschew violence as a means of achieving political objectives.

It is also necessary to recognize the democratic rights of groups representing other shades of opinion. The president said all parties and groups should be represented by effective leaders and they must be able to subscribe to agreements which will be honored. The president expressed the

determination to break away from the past and cut through years of prejudice and suspicion. He emphasized the need to make necessary accommodation and compromises to achieve prosperity and unity in the country. The president said the government extended the hands of friendship both to the JVP [Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna] and the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] and they saw our humaneness as a sign of weakness.

The president made these observations when he addressed parliamentarians at the ceremonial inauguration of the third session of the second parliament this morning. The president pointed out that the government stands for the peaceful resolution of problems and for Sri Lanka in which every ethnic group and every religious denomination are equal partners with one another. The language problem which agitated the country for over a quarter century is no longer an issue. Sinhalese and Tamil are both official languages. Recruitment to the state services, including the armed services and police, are made on merit and ethnic ratio.

The government has been pursuing from its inception a consensual approach to the solution of problems. The president said that he referred to the representative committee of the all-party conference 20 issues of national importance. More than 20 recognized political parties, including most of the Tamil militant groups in the north and east, have been active participants in these deliberations. Consensus reached at the all-party conference has resulted in certain legislative measures being brought before parliament. These measures include amendment to the local government election law to ensure youth representation, the draft of the 17th amendment to the constitution for the strengthening of fundamental rights, the proposals for the establishment of the media commission and the nominations commission.

The president disclosed that the parties and groups taking part in the all-party conference are at present engaged in a search for a mutually acceptable solution to the problems in the north and east. He once again invited parties and groups who still remain outside the process to join in and make their own contribution. The president stressed the need to resolve national issues by national consensus. The president expressed his happiness for having given people the opportunity of selecting members to the local authorities after a lapse of eight years.

7 Children Among 21 Sinhalese Killed by Rebels

BK2104051991 Hong Kong AFP in English 0509 GMT 21 Apr 91

[Text] Colombo, April 21 (AFP)—Suspected Tamil Tiger guerrillas stormed a Sinhalese village in eastern Sri Lanka, killing at least 21 people, including seven children, a military spokesman here said Sunday.

Gunmen believed to be of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) attacked Niyadella village late Saturday and shot and hacked their victims and escaped after torching three houses and vehicles, the spokesman said.

The latest attack came a week after a similar massacre of 17 Sinhalese civilians in a neighbouring hamlet.

A woman who escaped the attack with a neck injury has been admitted to hospital in serious condition, the spokesman said.

He said the attackers had planted small anti-personnel mines around the village to hinder security forces and police rushing to rescue the villagers.

One villager lost his leg when he stepped on a pressure mine, the spokesman said, adding that a search had been mounted for the killers.

A police spokesman in the area contacted by telephone said the guerrillas had also shot dead a wild elephant in the thick jungle surrounding the village.

The latest massacre site was about 45 kilometers (30 miles) from the hamlet of Etimale, which was attacked on Sinhala and Hindu New Year Day last Saturday.

The military also blamed that massacre, in which 17 civilains were killed, on the LTTE, which so far has not commented.

In other developments, security forces killed at least 38 LTTE activists in separate incidents overnight in the island's embattled northeast, the military spokesman said.

He said helicopters shot dead 25 guerrillas while ground troops gunned down nine in a single encounter in Mannar District. Three rebels were killed by Army commandos near Weli Oya and another in Palaly.

There were no casualties among security forces, the spokesman said.

Three civilians died when they were caught in cross fire between the LTTE and security forces manning a roadblock in Vavuniya in the north on Saturday, the spokesman said.

The LTTE is fighting to establish a separate state for the island's Tamil minority of two million concentrated in the northeast.

Some 6,490 people have died since the LTTE resumed its guerrilla campaign last June after ending 14 months of secret peace talks with Colombo.

13 Soldiers, 18 Militants Killed in Fighting

BK2004161491 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT 20 Apr 91

[Text] In Sri Lanka, 13 soldiers and 18 LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] militants have been killed in fresh fighting in northern and eastern provinces. A military spokesman said in Colombo today that nine soldiers and 15 militants were killed in a heavy gun battle in (Parapakkaranathan) in Mannar District. Three militants were killed in the neighboring Murunkan area. In another incident, four security personnel were killed when the LTTE militants ambushed them at Welikanda in the Sinhalese-dominated Polonnaruwa District.